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Christmas Eve



*Children's eve—with royal lights and Christmas tree.
A peaceful snooze in church on mother's knee.
No Christmas cat! But a little cart to draw,
And a little rubber bird to squeeze at: Aw, aw, aw!*

*Children's eve—that all too soon must take to flight.
For after play and laughter comes "Good-night!"
Mama brings a piece of bread that heals all sorrow,
And the child sleeps, slice in hand, until to-morrow.*

*Grown-ups' eve—but varied store the years have brought.
Old memories come beating in on waves of thought.
Old folks' eve—from stooping heads frost melts away,
And haloed light shines over little children's play.*

From the Icelandic of **Sigurður Sigurðsson**
in the translation of Watson Kirkconnell.

The above is the first selection in a book of translations entitled: "20th Century Scandinavian Poetry. The Development Of Poetry In Iceland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland 1900-1950". There is an introduction to each group and the Introduction to the selections from Iceland is by Dr. Stefán Einarsson. Permission to reprint is gratefully acknowledged to the General Editor, Martin S. Allwood, and to The Scandinavian Book Club, Franklin Park, N. Y.

EDITORIALS

LEST WE FORGET

On November 11th last, in humility and with deep gratitude we paid reverent tribute to a memory, a beautiful remembrance that will not, and must not, fade with the passing years.

They responded to a call!

From remote fishing villages on the misty shores of the turbulent Atlantic, from the factories, offices, and schools of the big cities, from the lonely farms of the vast prairies, from the lumber camps of the region where the roar of the Pacific holds eternal sway, they came; men of many races, many creeds.

It was 1914!

The Western World looked back on the long, slow, toilsome, heartbreaking journey upwards, away from tyranny, away from man's inhumanity to man, away from greed, and hate, and lust for power. It dreamed of a world of plenty and happiness. It wistfully shared the vision of Burns:

"That man to man the world o'er
Shall brithers be for a' that."

It was a cheerful, hopeful, optimistic friendly world, confident that nothing could stop or delay the onward march of progress.

Then a black cloud on the horizon! At first no bigger than a man's hand. A few shots in an obscure Balkan town, and the Western World awoke to the realization that all its blessings might be lost in one fell swoop.

The response was quick!

The Founder of Christianity once said, "He who would'st be the greatest amongst you, let him be the servant of the rest". When the youth of Athens

were inducted into the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship, they took an oath: "I will transmit my fatherland, not only not less, but greater and better than it was transmitted to me". Similarly did they think, the young, the gay, and the best, as they marched off to war in the far-off days of 1914 singing "It's a Long Way to Tipperary" and "Keep the Home Fires Burning".

Many of them came back to their places in the community. There they accepted their responsibilities purposefully, striving against obstacles and opposition to create the kind of a world which we hope for, long for, and of which we dream.

Some of them did not come back. They made the last supreme sacrifice of love:

"— — — — Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders Fields."

Even in death they were mindful of humanity; they were still their brothers' keepers, and they flung to us a challenge:

"Take up our quarrel with the foe;
To you, from failing hands we throw
The torch — — — —"

It may be that the author did not refer to a human foe. The theme of the poem is too noble and lofty to contain such a sentiment as hate. The "foe", no doubt, rather may have referred to conditions that create war and destruction: insecurity and ignorance, greed and hate, indifference and selfishness, lust for power.

How well did we take up that challenge? For the response humanity gave in the period between the wars it has good reason to hang its head in shame. There followed the "roaring twenties", when too many flung all sense of responsibility to the four winds. The pursuit of pleasure became the main goal in life.

Then followed the hungry thirties. Finally a discouraged, disillusioned, cynical world drifted unwillingly and helplessly into another World War.

How well the democratic world responded at that time can best be illustrated by quoting from an article which appeared in the New York Times shortly after Dunkirk.

"So long as the English tongue survives, the word 'Dunkirk' will be spoken with reverence. For in that harbor, in such a hell as never blazed on earth before, at the end of a lost battle, the rags and blemishes that had hidden the soul of democracy fell away. There, beaten but unconquered in shining splendor she faced the enemy.

"They sent away the wounded first. Men died so that others could escape. It was not so simple a thing as courage, which the Nazis had in plenty. It was not so simple a thing as discipline which can be hammered into men by a drill sergeant. It was not the result

of careful planning, for there could have been but little.

"It was the common man of the free countries rising in all his glory out of the mill, office, factory, mine, farm and ship, applying to war the lessons learned when he went down the shaft to bring out trapped comrades, when he endured poverty and hard work for his children's sake.

"This shining thing in the souls of men Hitler cannot command, or contain, or conquer. He has crushed where he could from German hearts.

"IT IS THE GREAT TRADITION OF DEMOCRACY! IT IS THE FUTURE! IT IS VICTORY!"

The sinister use that can be made of Atom power casts an ever darkening shadow across the horizon, threatening to eclipse the ideals for which the heroes fought.

Across the tumultuous years that have passed since 1914, above the conflict of seemingly irreconcilable ideologies, may still be heard a ringing challenge!

Flanders! Dunkirk! Beckoning light in the gloom of troubled human relations, summoning mankind to the fulfillment of the ideals of the Foundation of Christianity!

YOU MUST NOT FAIL THEM AT RENDEZVOUS.

IN THE EDITOR'S CONFIDENCE

As previously indicated in this column, our Editorial Board endeavours, whenever feasible, to feature in each issue of **The Icelandic Canadian** some geographical region which comes within its sphere of contact. Our Winter Issue, 1953, featured the Pacific Northwest; our Summer Issue, 1954,

featured the region east of the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River. In this issue we are featuring the fountain head of our ethnic group, that storied land of saga and song, ICELAND.

In an effort to "pay meet adoration to its household gods" the Icelandic nation has dedicated itself to the task

of reviving the ancient function and significance of the diocese of Skálholt in order that from it once again may emanate those spiritual influences which from the time of Bishop Gizur unified the nation and enabled it to survive in a hostile environment where the bitter winds of adversity all too frequently accompanied the bitter Arctic blasts, the selfsame circumstances that obliterated the Icelandic colony in Greenland.

The feature article in this issue, SKÁLHOLT, is written by Prof. Sigurbjörn Einarsson of the Department of Theology in the University of Iceland, sent to us by Dr. Alexander Jóhannesson, former rector of the University of Iceland, and translated by Judge W. J. Lindal. It may be mentioned here that it is hoped that this article is but one of a series of subsequent articles in an interchange between the people of Iceland and its kith and kin in North America. This project of thus "bridging the ocean" has been previously suggested in the editorial pages of **The Icelandic Canadian**. The dream now gives promise of becoming a reality.

The tragic and mysterious fate of the colony in Greenland, established by Eric the Red, will long remain a subject of speculation. Kristján Eldjárn discusses archaeological discoveries in that northern island, which shed some light on a possible cause of the extermination of the settlement, in the article VALLEY OF THE EASTMEN which Prof. Tryggvi J. Oleson translated for us.

★

There are times when we utter the prayer of Burns when he said:

"Oh, would some power the giftie
gie us
To see oursel's as ithers see us".

We accordingly invite comments from our readers, be they brickbats or be they bouquets. We beg the indulgence of our readers in publishing a recent letter from Mr. C. M. Goethe of Sacramento, California:

Gentlemen:

Your autumn number just received is tremendously fascinating to a student of eugenics, particularly because of the photographs on pages 31 and 32. An anthropologist can see much in studying the faces of these men.

This writer has written repeatedly of his very great admiration for the fine people of Iceland. When there he was impressed with how, by intelligent selection, Iceland achieved the honor of being the world's first nation 100% literate. For this reason, he believes your magazine should be on file in the university libraries of Canada and of several American states. Under the circumstances, enclosed herewith is a check for \$15 for 10 subscriptions. Please enter them to the universities enclosed."

Mr. Goethe enclosed a list of the following universities: Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Alaska, Washington, Minnesota, North Dakota, Wisconsin.

For his words of encouragement and this generous gesture of goodwill the Editorial Board and Magazine Committee wish to convey to Mr. Goethe their sincere appreciation.

Season's Greetings to all our readers.

A. V.

SKÁLHOLT

by Prof. SIGURBJÖRN EINARSSON
of the Department of Theology in the University of Iceland

The history of Iceland, in the course of the centuries, is in large measure associated with the story of the two bishoprics, Skálholt and Hólar. In the beginning of the period of the republic* and during the growth and expansion of the Christian religion they became the nation's main centres of learning and culture and at the same time became in many ways centres of political life in the country. At present Skálholt is in a special way before the public. The purpose of this article is to refer to some of the events in its history and to give an account of the plans under way to restore some of the glory and significance of this ancient seat of learning.

In the year 1000 A.D., after some years of missionary effort and after considerable conflicts between Christians and heathens, Christianity was established by Althing, the Parliament of Iceland. The compact, entered into in Althing, that all the people of the land were to be Christians, was, of course, rather a declaration of the Christianizing of the nation than an accomplished fact. The young church was weak in every respect; for instance, there were very few priests and there was no acknowledged leadership or central authority. Furthermore, a large percentage of the people was undoubtedly heathen, both in thought and action.

The chiefs in Iceland, who had made the greatest contribution to the victory of Christianity, erected churches on their farmsteads and sought to get

priests for them. Some of the chiefs sent their sons abroad so that they could study theological subjects at the best centres of learning of the day.

The chief, who more than any other had supported the move to Christianity, was Gissur the White, who resided at Skálholt* in Árnes-district where his father had resided before him. He erected a church on his ancestral estate and sent his son, Ísleifur, abroad to study in Germany. Ísleifur came back a learned man, took up residence at Skálholt and founded a school. Many men, who later became widely known, acquired an education there.

When half a century had passed from the time Christianity had been established in Iceland the people felt that the time had come when the church should be provided with a bishop. Ísleifur was selected and he went abroad to be consecrated, and on Whitsunday in the year 1056, the ceremony was performed by the Archbishop in Bremen. On coming home after the consecration he took up residence in his family estate, Skálholt, and that automatically made it the seat of the bishopric. On his death he was succeeded by his son, Gissur, who may well be regarded as one of the greatest men of Iceland. He erected a new cathedral at Skálholt which was dedicated to the Apostle, Peter. Then he gave his patrimony, Skálholt, to the cathedral and much other property and solemnly pronounced that a bishopric should always be there as long

* The Republic came to an end with the Union of Norway and Iceland in 1262.

* Skálholt is close to sixty miles almost straight east of Reykjavík.

as Iceland was inhabited and Christian-ity endured.

BISHOP GISSUR ÍSLEIFSSON

Gissur was a great leader and it is stated in old chronicles that he could well have been regarded as both the king and the bishop of the country as long as he lived. By introducing the tithe system he laid a foundation for the financial independence of the church and for organized aid to the poor. Partly through his efforts a bishopric was established at Hólar* and a quarter of the country was brought under its jurisdiction.

Through Bishop Gissur Ísleifsson the church acquired a more solid footing in the life of the people and Skálholt, the headquarters of the church, gathered strength upon which it could draw for many centuries.

His successors were mostly excellent men and one can agree with the comments of the well-known scholar, Guðbrandur Vigfússon, in his introduction to the Bishops'-Saga, published in 1858:

"During the time of the first seven bishops at Skálholt Iceland undoubtedly enjoyed its finest period. At no time was there such complete peace in the country as then. And in speaking of the bishops themselves one can truthfully repeat what Gissur Hallsson said in his funeral sermon at the burial of Bishop Thorlákur Thórhallsson (d. 1193) that 'to his intimate friends each was considered the best'".**

* Hólar is in the north half of Iceland about forty miles almost straight west of Akureyri.

** The original is as follows: "Sá þykir hverjum beztur, sem kunnastur er". In its complete connotation the old Icelandic word "kunnr" includes the relationship of close friendship. "Kunnr . . . 'Peir voru mjök kunnir áðr', intimate friends. Ld. 166." Cleasby 359; Zoega, 252.

THE REFORMATION

To trace the saga of Skálholt one must relate the history of the whole of Iceland for about seven centuries. Without a doubt the men who occupied the see differed in stature. During the decline of the Roman Church men were at times appointed who were favorites and representatives of foreign kings and were loyal to neither church nor country.

Although foreign bishops occupying Icelandic sees played a part in bringing Iceland under foreign rule, still the Roman Church provided ecclesiastical powers which countered the royal power and for that reason the struggle of the last Roman bishops against the Reformation has always been interpreted as being to some extent a national struggle for independence.

The cradle of the Reformation was at Skálholt. There were a few young men in the service of the powerful Catholic bishop, Ögmundur Pálsson, who had studied at foreign universities and while there they had acquired some knowledge of Luther's struggle for church reform. Among them was Gissur Einarsson who later became the first Evangelic-Lutheran Bishop at the Skálholt see; another was Oddur Gottskálksson, son of a bishop at Hólar. Oddur undertook the task of translating the New Testament into the Icelandic language, but he had to do this secretly and without the knowledge of Bishop Ögmundur Pálsson. Oddur built himself a retreat in a stable at Skálholt and there he worked at the translation and in so doing laid the foundation for the Icelandic biblical language. In 1540 his translation of the New Testament was published. But the revolution cast a shadow on Skálholt when Jón Arason,

the Bishop at Hólar, and his sons were executed by the King's followers at Skálholt without any form of trial.

As is well known, representatives of Kings used the Reformation in many countries as a means for confiscating church property. This happened also in Iceland and with dire consequences because the country was under foreign rule. The revenue from monastic properties disappeared out of the country. In addition, the King's representatives grabbed the treasures and any other property of the church, particularly the cathedrals, on which they could lay their hands. The first Evangelic-Lutheran bishops did what they could, within their power, to prevent this. Nevertheless the Icelandic Reformation Church began its history as an organization stripped of material substance in a country which had become considerably poorer than before.

During the centuries that followed some outstanding leaders occupied the seat at Skálholt. Some of them were men of great learning, not only in theology but in other fields as well, such as grammar, astronomy, Icelandic history and literature. The cathedral school often flourished vigorously and provided theology students with a good classical as well as a theological education. After the Reformation all the Lutheran bishops were native born and most of them were patriotic and loyal citizens. Bishop Thórður Thórláksson (d. 1697) was the first man to begin publishing the ancient Golden Age literature within the country and his predecessor, Brynjólfur Sveinsson, was most enthusiastic about the traditional culture of the nation and strove to save ancient manuscripts from destruction.

BISHOP JÓN VÍDALIN

The most beloved son of Iceland

among all the bishops at Skálholt was Jón Vídalín (d. 1720), who "uttered words of confidence and courage in the despairing which the heart understood," to quote from the poem to him by Einar Benediktsson. For over a century Jón Vídalín's sermons were considered essential Sunday reading and on account of their religious zeal and wealth of words and illustration they will always be regarded as part of the enduring writings in Icelandic literature. No one, writing in Icelandic, has succeeded in sounding the Mosaic law in more powerful notes or has given expression to the joyful message on more soothing strings for the uplifting of the intractable as well as the distressed. No one, in the eyes of the Icelandic public, has shed brighter lustre on Skálholt than he.

The last two bishops at Skálholt, Finnur Jónsson and his son, Hannes, were highly educated men. The former wrote the church history of Iceland from its beginnings to his time, a colossal work written in Latin. The latter took a great interest in the enlightenment of the common people and published many writings for the edification and instruction of the general public.

THE DECLINE AND DESTRUCTION OF SKÁLHOLT

By this time economic conditions in the country had become very distressing. The scourge of trade monopolies of long duration, merciless taxation demands, loss of liberty—it all was having a penetrating effect. In addition, years of unusually severe weather were very frequent and towards the end of the century occurred the most violent volcanic eruption in the history of the country. Extreme poverty bent the nation, misfortune warped its courage and pride. The

bishopric at Skálholt shared the plight of the people and poverty made its fingerprint upon it. Then in addition, during the terrible earthquakes of 1784, many of the buildings at Skálholt were damaged or destroyed. The government of the country, located in Copenhagen, did not have many solutions for relieving conditions and none effective. One of its decisions was to close the seat at Skálholt, sell the Cathedral and all its property and move the bishop and the school to Reykjavík, the small village on the southwest coast, which by that time was beginning to take on the form of a capital. A few years later the seat at Hólar was also closed and the whole of the country was united under one bishop at Reykjavík.

The last bishop at Skálholt, Hannes Finnsson, was given permission to reside there the remaining years of his life. He died in 1796. In his passing a saga came to an end in a distressing way, which had begun so gloriously seven hundred and forty years before and during that span of time had woven so many radiant strands into the story of the people. The pronouncement made by Bishop Gissur Ísleifsson, the noble donor of the Skálholt estate, was disregarded and the sacred Skálholt tradition was deemed of no value. The seat was abandoned to the forces of destruction. The cathedral itself, "the mother of all other consecrated buildings in Iceland," was torn down; most of its treasures scattered and were lost. Twelve large bells, which for centuries had resounded over the adjoining district, were broken to pieces and the copper sold to craftsmen for their trade. An Altar-cabinet, an exceptional piece of art, made in Holland in the fifteenth century, was removed and was to be sent to Copenhagen but it

did not get further than to the seaport, Eyrarbakki. It was forgotten and it lay there, in poor quarters, for many years and finally when all ornamentation had fallen off and the woodwork rotted, it broke into pieces. What was left was taken to Copenhagen. Insignificant remnants of this treasure are now in the National Museum in Reykjavík. Many other valuables, which cannot be replaced, were lost or destroyed.

Things have remained in this plight ever since. The seat at Skálholt is in ruins. Instead of the cathedral an unsightly chapel has been erected. An ordinary farmhouse came into existence on top of the ruins of the diocese buildings.

PLANS FOR RECONSTRUCTION

The fate of the ancient sacred place has been as an open wound in the hearts of patriotic men. Sometimes Icelanders are slow to action. But the needs are many which have demanded the attention of the people during this, the first period of newly acquired economic and political independence. Skálholt had to wait a long time before it could be reached in the programme of national reconstruction.

But now Skálholt's turn has come. What mainly brought this about was that within a short while nine centuries will have passed since a bishopric, the seat at Skálholt, was established in Iceland. In the year 1956 this significant anniversary will be reached. The people feel that on that occasion they must commemorate in a worthy way the saga which that place signifies. They also feel that this cannot be done except by honouring the place in some manner, dress it in such form as befits a national sanctuary.

A few years ago a society, called the

Skálholt Society, was established for the purpose of furthering this cause, arousing interest, bringing men of action together and collecting money. The work of this society has received ever increasing support. The first step in its plan of action was to excavate the foundation of the ancient cathedral and examine its contents. That in itself was an important technical undertaking because it was known that the foundation had not been disturbed for one-hundred and fifty years, and it could be expected that the examination would reveal valuable evidence concerning church building and cultural history.

This exploration took place last summer under the direction of the Director of the National Museum, Kristján Eldjárn. A Norwegian expert in church research, Haakon Christie, was engaged to assist him.

The cathedrals at Skálholt were always constructed of timber. It may be assumed that the first church which Gissur the White erected was similar in design to Norwegian "stafkirkjur"* and that the design was to some extent continued for a considerable length of time. But later the style of the church acquired a more independent form with due-regard to progress in other lands and structural requirements.

The search has brought to light that the church which Bishop Klængur Thorsteinsson constructed about the middle of the twelfth century must have been very large and stately, a much larger building than people had expected. It was fully fifty metres in length, built in the form of a cross

and the arms of the cross were more than twenty metres in length between the posts. The main part of the church was twelve metres wide. That cathedral was considerably larger than the present Cathedral of Iceland in Reykjavík. This size of cathedral was maintained until about the middle of the seventeenth century.

The church was constructed of timber and was bound to deteriorate so that it often became necessary to repair and rebuild it. But it was always built on the same site and, as far as is known, in the same style. The church burned down twice, in 1309, by lightning which struck the steeple and in 1538 by causes unknown. A surprising amount was salvaged, especially the second time and on both occasions the people re-built the church in spite of courage and determination.

The last cathedral erected at Skálholt was built by Bishop Brynjólf Sveinsson in the middle of the seventeenth century. The see had become much poorer than before and the church was considerably smaller than the former ones, twenty-six metres long, twelve metres wide and twelve metres high. But the form of the foundation remained the same as the church was obviously patterned after the previous ones.

This is the only cathedral which was erected at Skálholt after the Reformation. It continued in existence even though the seat had ceased to exist and finally, after it had passed into private hands, it was torn down. It is a matter of great sorrow that this should have happened, because with reasonable repairs the church undoubtedly could have been preserved until the present time. But "everything becomes a weapon to the use of Iceland's adversity," to quote the

* In Norway some of the churches (called stav-kyrkior) have remained up to the present time. Cleasby, p. 338. Stafr — a staff, post, esp. in a building, as is still seen in Norway; the inner posts in a hall, Fms. X. 16, V p 1; op. cit. 586.

words of Bjarni Thorarensen*, one of the men of inspiration of the first half of the nineteenth century who urged the nation to resist the forces of ill fate and take positive action against them. The story of Iceland for over a century has centred around the task of recovering what has been lost. We lost our national sanctuary. But the recollections did not forsake us—Icelanders have a good memory—and the hallowed site is still ours. Most of what had gathered during the centuries was lost. Yet not lost. That which was accomplished at Skálholt, the nurture of what is sacred—cultural pursuits, education and training—has been woven into the life of the nation; it has strengthened its culture; it has ennobled its ways of thinking. Threads have spread out from the vanished cathedral at Skálholt; they have branched throughout the country, reached into every home, into every soul—the very life lines of the Christian faith. The sacred songs, the gospel messages, now all silent, which echoed under the vaulted ceiling of that sanctuary, still re-echo in the conscience of the nation. It is for that reason that so many yearn that Skálholt again become a spiritual centre, a headquarters for the Icelandic church, that a new cathedral be erected on the ancient foundation.

There is in existence a fairly good picture of the last cathedral at Skálholt and much is known about its construction. The research last summer

brought to light the continuity of design in the churches which had been erected there. People are very anxious that in its main features the new church be patterned after the others and their strong architectural lines followed. In size the church will probably compare with Brynjólfur Sveinsson's church.

THE CATHEDRAL RELICS

Of the special relics that were discovered in the foundation of the cathedral none attracted such wide attention as the stone-coffin of Bishop Páll Jónsson.

Bishop Páll Jónsson was the son of one of the greatest leaders of ancient times, Jón Loftsson in Oddi, a nephew of Bishop Thorlákur Thórhallsson, who was looked upon as a holy man and became a saint of Skálholt. Páll Jónsson was chosen bishop (1195–1211) following Thorlákur Thórhallsson. In his saga, which must have been recorded at Skálholt not long after his death, it is stated that he caused a trough to be hollowed out of stone in which he was to be placed upon his death. People had hoped that this precious relic would be found and such proved to be the case.

This stone-coffin is a special treasure—Icelandic stone-masonry—very neatly hewn out of solid rock. The Bishop's bones had been well preserved in the coffin and beside them was his episcopal staff, a remarkable work of art, in all probability the work of the artist, Margrét the Wood-carver. Many other special treasures have been found. The burial places of many of the bishops have been discovered and examined. Their bones will be allotted a dignified resting place in the new cathedral at Skálholt. And without doubt everything of value from Skál-

* The first three lines of a commemorative verse of six lines to another of the men of inspiration of the period, Baldvin Einarsson (1801-1833) who died from severe burns suffered in an accident. The original follows:

Íslands
óhamingju
verður allt að vopni,
eldur úr iðrum þess,
ár úr fjöllum
breiðum byggðum eyða.

holt will be preserved there, not only what was found last summer but also what is at present in museums.

THE AIMS OF THE SKÁLHOLT SOCIETY

The Skálholt Society is striving to obtain legal recognition for Skálholt as the residence of one of the two officiants* (vígslubiskupar) for the consecration of bishops. The National Church of Iceland has two men, who, in addition to the Bishop of Iceland in Reykjavík, have received a bishop's consecration, one for each of the two ancient bishoprics, Hólar and Skálholt. Neither of these officiating bishops has, as such, any duties except to perform the ceremony of consecrating a bishop when that is required. The men who are appointed "vígslubiskupar" continue to serve in their respective offices.

Now that the functions of the bishop have become wide and comprehensive, it is but natural that some of the duties of that office should be assigned to the officiating bishops.

There is another question of vital interest to the Society. It is that there be established at Skálholt a school of learning to provide the final training for theology students in preparation for the ministry, the school to be associated with the name of the great preacher, Jón Vídalín. Candidates who have graduated from the university will be expected to reside for a few months at the school where they will receive spiritual guidance and development and will be given instruction in handling problems of their calling.

* There is no Archbishop in Iceland and prior to 1909 the ceremony of consecrating a bishop was performed by an Archbishop in Denmark. In 1909 the ecclesiastical office of "vígslubiskup" was created and two officiants were appointed.

For these different purposes much money will be required which must be raised by contributions from the people through a nation-wide campaign. Althing has already promised a substantial sum for this rehabilitation programme.

These questions, which are of deep concern, are not rooted in a feeling of romanticism; the purpose is not to imitate the past. What the Society has in mind is to give permanence to the memories that enshroud the sacred ground, that they may become a source of spiritual nourishment in the future life of the people.

In these times no nation, least of all the smaller ones, has such assurance for its future that it can afford to lose any treasures of its history or heritage.

The Icelandic nation lacks visible memorials of its past, that is, if it lacks a priceless heritage of literature is excepted. The Icelandic Church does not own any temples from ancient times or the middle ages. Our manuscripts are the treasures of past ages which most clearly testify to the achievements of Icelandic minds and the art wrought by Icelandic hands. To us they are the more precious as we, in comparison with other cultured peoples of the old world, are more lacking in outer evidence of the cultural life of past ages.

But the places which have provided the setting for the greatest events in the history of the nation, are also of great value to us even though there be few structures on them built by man. The burial place of a good mother is equally sacred whether it is a lowly mound or a tomb adorned with a stately monument. An affectionate son or daughter bows to such ground; the mind aims higher than at other times

views the future from a different perspective, sets itself a loftier goal.

THE CHALLENGE

Skálholt is the most sacred place in the history of Christianity in Iceland. Men and women who believe that the Christian religion has given the nation those things of value which have been its greatest blessing up to this time and which it can the least afford to lose, desire to erect an altar on this ground before which, for years to come, the nation can unite, pray to God of our land, make sacred the memories, the hopes and its ultimate goal, marshal strength unto itself in

its upward course, with inspiration from the words of prayer in the National Anthem*:

"May our nation gain strength with
diminishing tears
On its course to a kingdom of God."

* The original lines are as follows:
"verði gróandi þjóðlíf með þverrandi tár,
sem þroskast á Guðs-ríkis braut." (1945 Ed.)
They are the last two lines in the last of three verses of the Icelandic National Hymn and Anthem: "O, Guð vors lands!" "God of our land", composed in 1874 by Rev. Matthias Jóhannsson on the occasion of the millennial celebration of the arrival of the first settlers in Iceland, Ingólfur Arnarson and Leif-ur Hróðmarsson.

(Translated by W. J. Lindal.
The footnotes are his).



A LIFE OF ACHIEVEMENT AND ADVENTURE

There are people of Icelandic descent in Canada and the United States who have accomplished much, but because of an innate reserve and modesty have received little publicity. Guðlaugur Pálsson is an example. His name and achievements are little known in Icelandic communities throughout the continent, and probably in Iceland.

Back in 1908, Mr. Pálsson, then a new Canadian from Iceland, went West and worked for several years on bridge construction with the Canadian Northern Railways, becoming assistant bridge engineer north of Edmonton. In 1914 he was appointed assistant to the district surveyor. Working in the summers enabled him to take winter courses at the University of Alberta, which qualified him as a registered surveyor and professional engineer of Alberta.

In 1919 he went to the federal leveling division of the topographical survey at Calgary. In 1925 he was assistant surveyor of the Alberta-Northwest Territories boundary, before coming to Ottawa as surveys engineer with the topographical surveys of what was then the department of the interior.

In 1936 Mr. Pálsson was park warden and timberman at Banff National Park, and designed and built the first ski tow there. From 1940 to 1942, he was on loan to the Calgary Power Company, surveying the great Minnewanka power project.

Later he laid out the townsite and other facilities at Yellowknife.

This year he is training young men for the legal surveys division of the federal department of mines and technical surveys, before retiring after 30 years' service; but his department is reluctant to let him retire. His face is tanned and muscled hardened from outdoor life, he spent last Christmas atop Caribou Mountain, north of Fort Vermillion, where, he said, he and his men had "Christmas with all the trimmings," even to a decorated tree.

A veteran of many harrowing experiences in the Northwest Territories, Mr. Pálsson says one of the worst was on an occasion when he and his party, near Reindeer Lake, got too far ahead of supplies and were without food four days before relief came.

Two fish caught in a net one night and two moose, we managed to kill and saved the situation," he recalled. "When we saw the moose we only had revolvers, so we jumped into the canoes, after heading them into the water, and chased them until we were close enough to shoot. After that we had enough dried meat for awhile."

It was his "will to win" which saved the lives of himself and his party when he stayed too long surveying the Snake River, north of Great Slave Lake, and became frozen in. It took some dangerous work to chop the ice on the lake so a pontoon plane could land for a rescue.

It also took the will to win when he and an assistant and two Indians shot the treacherous Canyon Rapids on the Churchill River on another expedition, and he says he saw the

Indians "turn pale under their brown skins."

Crossing a ten-mile stretch of Great Bear Lake in 1949 in a bad storm, he and his assistant and a priest to whom they were giving a "lift", had their hands full. "We had lost one paddle," he explained, "but somehow we made

it, between our work with the one paddle and the priest's prayers."

EDITOR'S NOTE:— In the event that his department allows him to retire, The Icelandic Canadian hopes that Mr. Pálsson will enjoy many years of activity of his own choosing. It is unlikely that a man of his calibre will ever "cease from travel". It is our hope that he may then find time to give the readers of our magazine an account of some of his interesting adventures. —A. V.

Dartmouth Honors Stefansson on 75th Birthday

Vilhjálmur Stefansson, famous Arctic explorer and author, celebrated his 75th birthday November 10. Dr. Stefansson, who has been Arctic consultant at Dartmouth College since 1947, was given a banquet at the home of president and Mrs. John Sloan Dickey, attended by some thirty faculty members and their wives. He also was honored by members of the faculty at a reception held in the college geography department.

Vilhjálmur Stefansson was the first man to demonstrate, against the pronouncements of many, that a white man could live in the Arctic on the same terms as the Eskimos of the Canadian Arctic and Greenland. He shared the Eskimos' shelter, adopted their clothes, food, and work habits, and learned their language. He has said that temperatures in North Dakota and Manitoba often become far colder than temperatures many miles to the north, and that the "friendly Arctic" presents no greater problems than other frontiers that man has conquered.

Dr. Stefansson was born at Arnes, Man., and moved as a boy to the Red River Valley of what was then Dakota Territory. He was expelled from two colleges because of his individualistic

thinking, but later proved himself right after his Arctic explorations. He graduated from the University of Iowa and holds an M.A. degree from Harvard and a Ph.D. from the University of Iceland.

Dr. Stefansson received messages of congratulation from many societies including the National Geographic Society, the American Geographers, the Geographical Society of Berlin, and the Geographical Society of Chicago and of Philadelphia.

NEW POETRY BOOK

Paul Bjarnason, of Vancouver, B. C. has recently published a new book of poetry. Entitled "Odes and Echoes", the volume consists of about 1/5 original verse and the balance translations from the Icelandic of Stephan G. Stephansson, Einar Benediktsson, Sig. Júl. Jóhannesson, Einar Páll Jónsson and others. The book was received too late for review at this time, but Mr. Bjarnason's reputation as a poet and translator is such that he needs no introduction to readers. "Odes and Echoes" is printed by Union Printers, Ltd., Vancouver; 186 pp. \$3.50.

VALLEY OF THE EASTMAN* (Austmannadalur)

A MEDIAEVAL SETTLEMENT IN GREENLAND
by KRISTJÁN ELDJÁRN. Translated by Tryggvi J. Oleson

It would ill become us Icelanders to denounce Americans for having introduced into this country and taught to the nation the bally-hoo technique of advertising, for it was an Icelandic who first employed this in the Western Hemisphere. If the Americans have brought us bally-hoo advertising they have only restored to us the legacy of Eric the Red a thousandfold.

It is no doubt correctly reported in the Book of the Icelanders that Eric the Red called his land Greenland because he believed that "men would desire to go there if the land had a good name". The name is a great misnomer. Greenland rises grey and rugged out of the sea and gives a chilly reception to visitors, nothing but ice and naked rocky ledges at first sight; and when the coast is reached there is in the main little vegetation, and that not at all green. Grey is the colour of Greenland. Therefore Sigurður Breiðfjörð wrote:

Landið hátt við lýða próf
litur grænn ei skýðir.
það er grátt af geitarskóf,
gamburmosa og víðir.

(No green colour is found adorning the country. It is grey with lichen (probooscideus), moss and willows (salix arctica).)

Such was the appearance of the land when Eric the Red discovered it, but he cared not a whit. He was an immigration agent and named the land accordingly. "Vakri-Skjóni hann skal heita, honum mun eg nafnið veita, þó að meri það sé brún". (This horse shall be called the ambling pie-

bald and I will give it that name, even though it be only a brown mare). But why then "Greenland"? Why did he not give the land a more irresistible name? Leif the Lucky was certainly true son of his father, for he called his land Wineland, certainly a much more impressive name than Greenland. Eric however, knew what he was doing. For himself bore a colourful name—Eric the Red—and therefore he wished his own land to remind one of some distinct colour. No doubt he was sensitive to colours, and has been pleasantly pleased with this combination of them, he himself red and the land green. If he possessed to any extent the ability to laugh at himself he no doubt smiled in private at these matters. The main point however was that the name suited his purpose. It was of value as an advertisement.

He who condemns his own wares as a poor merchant but he who cannot substantiate any of the praise which he heaps on them is little better. Eric the Red knew what answer to give the immigrants from Iceland when they demanded lands. He knew that in the inmost recesses of the long fjords, on the western coast there lay concealed summery, beautiful, and most habitable valleys rich in pasturage and shrubbery, salmon rivers and timber and he understood his countrymen well enough to realize that they would value such lands. The natural resources which meet the eye today

*This article first appeared in Kristján Eldjárn, *Gengið á reka*, Akureyri, 1948, and here translated from that work. Kristján Eldjárn is curator of the National Museum, Reykjavík, Iceland.

the old settlements would still warm the heart of many an Icelandic yeoman, and indeed it so happened that settlers from Iceland established themselves in a very short time in all those places in Greenland which were suitable for the Icelandic type of husbandry. Two settlements arose on the south-west coast of the country—the Eastern and Western Settlements—isolated Icelandic territories.

Greenland was a fine country when it was settled and no doubt it lured many of the most solid and great-minded sons and daughters of Iceland. But it failed them in the long run and destroyed the people who had made it their own. At the close of the Middle Ages their history was at an end. They disappeared and the settlements became a wasteland. Nevertheless districts which have once been inhabited, although later laid waste, remain to some extent different from those that have never known human occupation. The visible ruins of settlements leave their marks on a countryside and awaken other feelings in the observer than those awakened by a virgin tract. It is not the purpose of this little article to trace the history of the Greenlanders or discuss their fate but rather to visit for a moment an isolated valley in the Western Settlement and dwell on the ruins and relics which are to be found there. I, myself, have participated in the excavation of these ruins and therefore select for discussion this spot rather than other settlements in Greenland."

The town Godthaab lies in the same latitude as Reykjavík. Thence there extends inland a long and narrow fjord named Ameralik. In the Middle Ages its Icelandic name will have been Lýsufjörður. All Nordic place names in Greenland have now disappeared and the Eskimos have given new names

in their own language. On the shores of the fjord there may be seen many ruins from the Middle Ages just as in remote valleys in Iceland. At the base of the fjord there are the ruins of a large farm and a churchstead which was formerly named Sandnes. There was no finer farmstead in the Western settlement for here indeed both sea and land offer their best, unlimited pasturage in the uplands and the fjord teeming with seal and fish. Land, sea and vegetation combine to make the view from here exceptional. In my mind's eye I can see the settler who took for himself this glorious spot and I can well believe that this farm was the oldest in the Western Settlement. It may well be that it is the one which the Saga of Eric the Red named "in Lýsufjord". There dwelt Þorsteinn, the son of Eric the Red, the first husband of Guðríður, who later married Þorfinnur Karlsefni. On this spot today are great ruins which the sea has to some extent destroyed. The Eskimos name it Kilarsarfik and marvel greatly at the "large, large houses".

The fjord is navigable to Sandnes and reasonably deep, but thence to the base there are great shoals and silt deposits, which are visible at ebb tide, and form the deltas at the mouths of the innumerable beds through which the rivers and brooks make their way to the fjord. These silt deposits have the name of Ameragdla and are unnavigable and difficult for men and horses to traverse because of the sodden soil. From them extends Austmannadalur—a direct continuation of the fjord. It must have been part of the parish of Sandnes. A large mountain which extends to the sea separates the valley from Sandnes and makes communication difficult by land, while the great silt deposits prevent the use of ships so that the valley may



be said to be every isolated and unapproachable.

Fridjof Nansen and his fellows gave Austmannadalur its name when they descended into it from the ice-cap on their great ski journey in the year 1888. They named the valley for themselves because they were well enough informed to know that the Old Icelanders called the Scandinavians East-men. No place name is known from the valley and it is nowhere mentioned in written records. It is forty kilometers long and lies in an east-west direction from the ice-cap down to Ameragdla. Through it runs a large and forbidding glacial river, ice-cold and almost unnavigable. It is also devoid of fish and differs thus from most of the other rivers in the Western Settlement which in general are well-stocked with salmon and trout. The southern boundary of the valley is a steep mountain wall, in places very precipitous. In the odd spot, however, there are slopes with good pasturage, but nowhere is there level ground large enough for a farmstead and this portion has never been inhabited. The northern part is much more habitable although the level ground is not large. It is, however, possible to find, in many places, locations for home-fields and peaceful and sheltered spots for farm-buildings in the neighborhood of murmuring brooks and unscalable cliffs. The vegetation is rich and varied and at the height of summer this is a most attractive location for farms. The Eskimos call the land north of Austmannadalur "the land on the sunny side of the great river", and this shows that they are fully aware that this part is the more desirable. In the Middle Ages, Icelandic yeomen settled in this half of the valley. In it, there are the ruins of at least four farmsteads, which have

all been excavated. It is thus possible to form a fairly clear picture of the settlement in this remote valley.

At the mouth of the valley, near the silt deposits, one can discern the first signs of old habitations. These signs are always plain for the vegetation is greater and more luxuriant on the ruins than elsewhere. Yet there is not much to be seen in this unfavoured locality and it is certain that a farmhouse was never erected here but only a small building used for some unknown purpose at certain times of the year—a booth or a hut. Four kilometers thence further up the valley are to be found larger ruins and six kilometers thence another set, both ruins of old farm-buildings. They are located on the very bank of the river and it is plain that the river has destroyed and carried away a great part of them so that excavations cannot reveal a complete picture of what these farmsteads have been like. We will not, therefore, linger here, but make our way up the valley through waist-high birch thickets until we see almost in the middle of the district a large vale at the end of which is a high mountainous wall and fairly extensive lowlands extending to the river. In this vale there is a clearing in the thickets which reveals a level marshy plain covered with a sort of tundra vegetation because, even at the height of summer, there is frost in the ground. This is noteworthy because one can see in this vale the colourful flowers which always grow on the old ruins. In mediaeval times, farm buildings stood here and the clearing has been the farmer's homefield. Indeed one quickly spots the dyke, which runs in a large arc from the river and encloses the homefield and farm buildings. This homefield cannot have been frozen the year round when the farm-

ers utilized it. Indeed one sees here traces of one of the plagues which eventually made Greenland uninhabitable by the ancient Greenlanders—the notorious deterioration of the climate in the Northern Hemisphere in the latter part of the Middle Ages.

This must have been a handsome farm and its owner evidently a tidy man. The farm buildings are all made of untrimmed rocks and turf as is still common in Iceland. Everything has an Icelandic air, and no doubt it would be easy to ascertain, even though no written records were extant, whence the early settlers came. Their handiwork proclaims their Icelandic ancestry. The original building here seems to have been a long-house but many additions have transformed the buildings into an entirely different type. On one side of the entrance, is a room with a sleeping place or platform and at the end of the room is a small curd pantry (skyrbúr) with a sunken receptacle for a large vat or barrel. On the other side of the lobby was a large room, with a fireplace and a bench, in which there has been a loom, and in which were found 63 loom weights in a pile. From the entrance door winds a long passageway to the other structures in the rear, the most notable of which is a cow-byre with large double rows of flagstones forming the stalls. There has been room here for 10 to 15 cattle and in a recess there is a large stall reserved for the bull at a suitable distance from the other cattle. Attached to the barn is a hay-shed and at the back of the building some small rooms are attached to it. Everything is excellently arranged and care has been taken that the body heat of both men and animals might be utilized to the fullest extent. East of the buildings is a small smithy with an in-built draught-duct. In front of the

main buildings are two small structures, on a flat boulder in the homefield is a storehouse made of rock and outside the homefield sheep-fold or corrals. Nothing is lacking except sheep byres which indeed have never existed. It has not been feasible to keep sheep unless they could forage for themselves. Possibly the lambs have been taken from the mothers and the ewes milked. Non-milkers and especially wild caribou would provide meat. Austmannadalur is located in the best caribou country in Greenland and the farmers no doubt spent part of the time in hunting. Possibly they should really be called hunters who practise an old form of husbandry along with their hunting.

And now let us continue further up Austmannadalur past gently sloping inclines along the river which here runs calm and wide, although opposite the farm described above, it runs in a narrow channel and forms a considerable waterfall. About 2 miles up the valley from the above-mentioned farm, a lateral valley runs up toward the north-east. In it are marshes and bogs, enclosed by ridges on both sides. Here is to be found the innermost farm in Austmannadalur, from which an hour's walk brings one to the ice cap. The upland of this farm is very extensive and beautiful with green meadows on both sides of the river which forms a magnificent waterfall at the base of the valley. This may be seen from far down the valley. The location of the farm buildings on the innermost farm is neither as impressive nor as friendly as that on the other farm. Here is no steep mountain in the background, but only rounded hills. The buildings are located on a low ridge which extends like a tongue into the dale and slopes away on both sides. The buildings must have been

as odd an architectural maze as is to be seen anywhere. There are in all 22 buildings joined together and almost all connected by internal passages. Some of these are, obviously, the dwelling places of the inhabitants and some of them are so well preserved that they afforded a unique opportunity of ascertaining architectural details, such as the timber work of the living room, e.g. the benches. But more than human beings inhabited these houses. Behind the sleeping-room, goats were housed in a separate room. In it is still to be found an odoriferous layer of manure 75 cm. deep and along one wall are many tethering pegs which have been driven into the layer of manure as it built up. On the middle of the floor was found the backbone of a whale. In the centre of the buildings was the cow-byre, a central heating plant, for it is very likely that it was located there in order that the heat from the byre might benefit those in the adjoining rooms. All the houses are constructed of turf and rocks, . . .

The buildings at both of these farms are very peculiar, and especially those of the latter. They both belong to the type which is called the centralized house, which marks a distinct stage in the history of the development of buildings in Greenland. The type is closely connected with the struggle for survival and the fate of the people there, as will be mentioned later. But let us first look at the relics which have been found through excavations in the Austmannadalur.

The ground frost, or perma-frost, which never thaws the year round is of use only to archaeologists. Although it is slow work excavating frozen ruins, and one must be content to dig only in the thin layer which thaws every twenty-four hours, yet the ground frost has this advantage, that

it preserves very well, various articles which would not have been preserved otherwise. It is thanks to it that hundreds of mediaeval artifacts made of perishable materials, wood, horn, bone, and even woolen clothing, are extant today. Because of this, we know a good deal about the material culture of the Greenlanders which would otherwise be a closed book to us. Greenland is much wealthier than Iceland in various materials useful in a primitive farming culture. There is an abundance of soapstone which the Greenlanders used to make pots and pans, of caribou antlers, walrus teeth and baleen. Articles made from all these materials are found in the ruins in Austmannadalur no less than elsewhere in Greenland. Few sites have been richer in finds than the two farms described here. Some of the rooms were veritable mines of relics, and there is little doubt that these farms were abandoned in haste and without forethought. Men who have plenty of time when moving from a place do not leave behind so many useful articles. In the ruins of the buildings, we found hundreds of articles, many undamaged: harpoons, knives, awls, scissors, scythes, shuttles, spoons, large and fine-toothed combs, and many other things, too numerable to mention here, and which can be better described by means of pictures than words. We get here a more complete picture of mediaeval tools than from any other country. In Iceland, very few mediaeval relics are found in excavations of farmsteads. The excavations in Greenland are, therefore, of very great value to us, because the culture of the Greenlanders originated in Iceland and developed along the same lines as that of the mother country in most ways. The most beautiful and finest article which we

found in the Austmannadalur was dug up in the living room at the farm farthest inland. It seemed to us that that room had suffered from fire although many articles lay undamaged in the remains from the fire. The article was a fir slab 20 cm. long with a crucifixion figure in high relief. The



base ends in a point and this makes it likely that this was a rood designed to be carried in processions. In my opinion, the crucifix came originally from the church of Sandnes. If this is so, it would seem to mean that this large homestead was laid waste before the farm in the remote dale. The rood is Gothic in style in the main. Christ is shown dying, wearing a crown of thorns and the feet are nailed to the cross with only one nail. There are, however, many details which point back in time to the Romanesque crosses, and the general impression given by the crucifix seems to be Romanesque. The Gothic characteristics are, nevertheless clear enough to enable us to assert that the crucifix cannot be older than from the middle of the 13th century, and when one considers how isolated a part of the Christian world Austmannadalur was, it may be confidently stated that the rood dates from 1300 or even a little

later. It demonstrates that Austmannadalur was occupied by good Christians until the end, because there is fairly reliable evidence that the Western Settlement disappeared shortly after the middle of the 14th century, although the Eastern Settlement lasted much longer, or at least until about 1500.

The rood fixes the age of the farm in Austmannadalur. They date from about 1300 or a little later and represent the last stage in the architecture of the Greenlanders in the Western Settlement. That brings us again to the subject of the ruins of the farm buildings. So many have now been investigated that it is possible to trace the development of houses in Greenland and draw from this important conclusions about the life and death of Greenland's mediaeval inhabitants. The Danes have shown great energy in excavating ruins in Greenland and because of this we are able to trace the course of events and compare with the history of the development of Icelandic farm buildings.

The first houses which the settlers raised were large undivided halls with the entrance in the front near the gable end. Such houses are well-known from the old Icelandic sagas and from the old Icelandic sagas and archaeological investigations in Iceland. The farm houses of Iceland and Greenland are thus of the same type in the earliest stage, and it is interesting to observe on what lines development takes place in each of these countries. The first change which the Greenlanders make is to introduce an entrance leading to a vestibule or lobby in the middle of the house with rooms on both sides and back of the vestibule. This was a very great improvement because it rendered possible the elimination—to a great extent—of the cold air coming in

through the entrance door, which must always have been considerable as long as the entrance door was directly on the hall itself. If it became necessary to increase the number of rooms in such a house, the logical course was to extend the vestibule further back and build a new series of rooms behind those already at the front and so on as long as new rooms were required. Through this, the vestibule was transformed into a long passageway with doors leading into the rooms on both sides, bringing about the fully developed type of building which is so well-known in Iceland, —the passage-house.. Then the Greenlanders invent a new type of building which may be called the centralized house, the type well represented by the buildings on the two farms in Austmannadalur. There every effort was made to join the rooms or buildings as closely as possible to one another, human habitation, byres and storehouses. — The byre was usually in the centre of this collection of buildings, whose number might become very great, as on the farm farthest inland in Austmannadalur, where they are 22 in number. These buildings are irregularly laid out. There is no passage from the entrance door to serve as a main thoroughfare between the various rooms. On the contrary, it is necessary to wend one's way from room to room by many a crook and turn in order to reach some of the rooms from the entrance to the house. The evolution of the turf building in Greenland is therefore this: an undivided longhouse or hall, a longhouse with a central vestibule or lobby, the passage-house, and finally the centralized house.

What was the development in Iceland? We are in a poor position to answer this question because relatively

few ruins have been investigated in this country. In place of these, we do possess descriptions of houses given in the Icelandic sagas. But these are sometimes untrustworthy and it is often difficult to determine what type of house is being described. It seems, however, possible to say that the old hall was first transformed into two or more longhouses which stood end to end and had a common entrance on the gable end of the main building. This type is found on the farm at Stöng and other farms in Þjórsárdalur. But these buildings can unfortunately not be dated with certainty although it is likely that they are from the 13th century. This type of building corresponds to the buildings in Greenland with the central lobby. A passage-house has never been found in mediaeval ruins in Iceland and in the sagas, e.g. in Sturlunga no description is to be found which indubitably describes a passage-house. Sturlunga's descriptions seem to suggest that buildings of the type at Stöng were the most common structures in the 13th century in Iceland. Structures similar to the centralized houses of the Greenlanders probably never existed in Iceland.

Because the passage-house is the result of a natural evolution in Greenland, but is on the other hand unknown in mediaeval ruins and writings in Iceland, although common there in later centuries, some have thought that the Greenlanders originated the passage-house and that the Icelanders very likely copied it from them. The former conjecture is very likely right: the Greenlanders did originate the passage-house. The latter is much more unlikely. It is true that we do not know when the first passage-houses were made in Iceland, but neither ruins nor written sources give

us any reason to believe that it was earlier than the 14th century that the first ones arose in Iceland. It is, therefore, only in that century that the Icelanders for the first time learned to build this type of house from the Greenlanders. But it is at that very time that the period of decline is beginning in Greenland and communications with the outside world are being disrupted. It is hardly to be expected that cultural influences radiated from Greenland during that period.

Nevertheless, annals do record some intercourse between Iceland and Greenland in the 14th and 15th centuries and the above theory might therefore be valid. On the other hand, it is just as likely that the correspondence of the Greenlandic and Icelandic passage-houses is the result of a parallel evolution. Building materials, climate, and working habits determine the type of habitation a people erect. All these matters are alike in Iceland and Greenland. It is therefore not surprising that both people should evolve the same type of building and reach the same solution of a common problem. The Greenlanders reach their goal first because the conditions which govern changes in types of buildings in these northern lands are more pressing in Greenland than in Iceland. But at length both peoples reach the same solution.

The central house of the Greenlanders belongs to them alone. It is obviously designed to permit one to pass from building to building without having to go outdoors. The byre is placed in the midst of the buildings and all the other rooms concentrated around it, like pens around the common sheep corral. The Danes have long held the view that the buildings are so arranged for the sake of the cows, that they must be guaranteed

warm quarters. To us, however, may seem likely that the cows were placed in the central rooms in order that they might heat the surrounding ones, that the byre was a sort of central heating plant. It is sufficient, in this connection, to mention the Icelandic combination living-room and byre. In it, the heat from the byre was used to heat the human dwelling. The Icelanders adopted this practice only in later centuries. The statements in the sagas describing byres which may have entered directly from the house mean only that a passage or door lay between the byre and the dwelling house for the sake of convenience, e.g. at Þórarinsstaðir.

The history of the turf farm buildings in Greenland is the history of the struggle of the Greenlanders against the cold. Each new development in their architecture is a new defence against it. The cold determined the lines along which the houses of the Greenlanders evolved. Because of it the central lobby house was developed, in order that nowhere need there be a door on the human habitations leading directly out into the cold. Similarly the passage-house was evolved, on which there are only one or two outside walls in each room and one entrance for the whole of the buildings. That architectural maze which we have here named the centralized house, gives, however, the greatest evidence of the battle with the cold. Here many small houses with enormously thick walls are huddled together in order that each may shelter the other, and the cows and other animals are housed in the structure so that they can be attended to without it being necessary for the attendants to go outside. At the same time a certain amount of warmth is radiated from the byre. Comparison with Iceland

informative. The Icelanders have followed the same paths, although much more slowly, because in Iceland the struggle against the cold is not so intense. We began with impressive halls containing long fireplaces, divided these later into smaller buildings, evolved the passage-house, converted the bath and living room into a sleeping chamber and finally introduced the cows into the house to supply heat.

There are many things which indicate that the climate in Scandinavia worsened in the later Middle Ages, and no doubt this was so. The history of the farm buildings in Iceland and Greenland mirrors this change. The culture which the original settlers of Iceland brought with them thither and which was carried to Greenland was not a polar culture and never became that. The Icelanders have never mastered the art of living in a cold country. From the beginning until the present they have perished on trips between farms, although Eskimos, who inhabit far colder countries have never died from exposure. The old culture has, however, changed in many ways in the new environment. The evolution of the houses of the Icelanders and Greenlanders is in fact only the result of the necessity to adapt and adjust them to the colder climate. The adjustments made were sufficient to enable the Icelanders to survive even in spite of calamities. But the Greenlanders succumbed in the struggle. No adjustments made it possible for them to survive under the conditions offered by the old farming culture. The people perished, because its culture was such that it was not in harmony with the physical conditions of the country. There are indeed, some who believed that the Greenlanders did not perish, but that they intermixed with the Eskimos and

adopted their mode of life. Even though this be true it does not really alter what has been said above. The people as a people perished and its culture disappeared, because it relied on occupations and social habits which were not feasible in Greenland, where the Eskimos, on the contrary lived the life of Riley under the same physical circumstances, because their culture was in complete harmony with conditions in the arctic lands.

The discovery of Greenland and its settlement was one of the great events and achievements in the history of the Icelanders. Ari the Learned devoted a chapter to this matter in his *Íslendinga bók*, as he did to the founding of the Alþing and the adoption of Christianity. But therewith the tale is told, and we can take no pride in our subsequent relations with Greenland. We made no move to help the Greenlanders when they were in difficulties, and yet at that time we were prosperous and possessed reasonably good ships. We share guilt with other Scandinavian nations for having allowed a weak brother to perish under our eyes, and it would be adding insult to injury for us to claim as Icelandic all that the Greenlanders accomplished. The settlers of Greenland were of Icelandic stock, but their descendants were Greenlanders, not Icelanders, in the same sense that Egill Skallagrímsson was an Icelandic, although his grandfather was a good yeoman in Norway.

On the other hand it cannot be denied that blood is thicker than water. And this is true of our relations with Greenland. It is in its way Icelandic. Sigurður Breiðfjörð addressed the mountains of Greenland:

“Það er vinskaps orsök ein
yðar, verð að lofa,

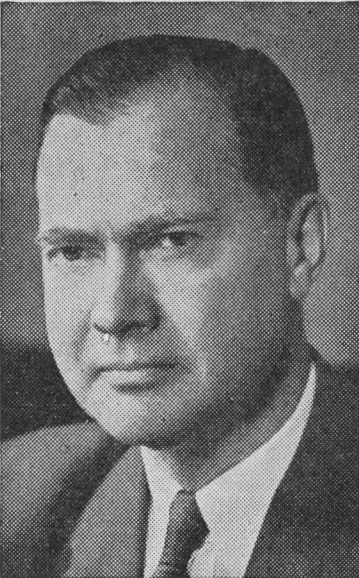
Íslendinga öldruð bein
í ykkar skjóli sofa."

(There is only one reason for praising your friendship, the bones of old Icelanders sleep in your embrace).

The Greenlanders were more closely related to us than any other people and stood side by side with us in the

battle against the cruel cold of the North. Where the danger was greatest, they took their stand, and therefore they left their bones on the battlefield while we survived. The far settlements of Greenland are for sacred spots like the grave of a vanished brother.

HEADS NATIONAL ORGANIZATION



G. S. Thorvaldson, Winnipeg lawyer, was recently elected to the presidency of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce at a meeting held in Halifax. Mr. Thorvaldson has long distinguished himself through his activity in legal and political circles. His warm, friendly personality has created a wide acquaintance both locally and in Eastern Canada, making him eminently suited to the new post. A despatch from Halifax described Mr. Thorvaldson as a man "with a realistic sense of the responsibility of business to the economy" and he sincerely believes that the members of the Chamber

"could and should co-operate with labor."

Mr. Thorvaldson is a member of the law firm of Thorvaldson, Eggertson, Bastin and Stringer.

GENEROUS DONATION TO BETEL

Haraldur V. Olafsson, manager of Falkinn, Ltd., Reykjavík, Iceland, has recently donated to Betel Old Folk Home at Gimli, seventy-five Icelandic phonograph records.

Falkinn Ltd., is the Icelandic representative for Victor and Columbia recording companies. For a long time most Icelandic records were recorded by Falkinn and afterwards shipped to England for final manufacture and distribution.

Finnbogi Guðmundsson, on behalf of the donor, presented the records at Betel Oct. 28th. **Sigríður Hjartarson**, matron, and **Sigurður Olafsson**, chairman of the Betel committee, accepted the gift on behalf of the residents.

A scroll, prepared by **Gissur Eliasson**, bearing the names of the residents written partially by themselves and words of appreciation, was sent to Mr. Olafsson.

There are sufficient records to provide entertainment for thirty minutes a day for two weeks without repetition. Betel has a loudspeaker system so that records can be heard in every part of the building.

Daughter of Iceland Overcomes Obstacles in Venture to Valley

by ED. DELANEY

The policy of The Icelandic Canadian has always been to reach out to articles and reports which reflect the reaction of other people to the activities of people of Icelandic origin. The article below is a news story published in the Glendale News-Press of Glendale, Cal., written in Sunland which is in the foothills about twenty miles north-east of Los Angeles. The story is at once a sample of the not unnatural errors made by people who have a limited knowledge of Iceland and the admiration which exemplary sons and daughters of Iceland instil in those about them. —Editor.



Mrs. Ingibjörg Gudmundson

Incongruous and incredible as it may seem, a natal daughter of Iceland is now a resident of Sunland. This descendant of the hardy and almost legendary Norsemen who claimed and populated that Arctic isle centuries ago, is Mrs. Ingibjörg Gudmundson of 8123 Foothill Blvd.

Until World War II disrupted the European scene, Iceland was to most persons, merely a colored spot on the map, little known and seldom visited by those from more temperate climes.

But after an American president included the outpost of civilization in his grandiose plan for global glory, ships and planes and shivering soldiers learned a little, but usually all they cared to know about it.

Ingibjörg and the eldest of her brood had left Iceland over half a century before the Americans discovered it.

Married at an early age to a buidercaptain of a sailing vessel, she knew something of the rigors of ice and snow, also the hazards and often the privations of those who depend upon the sea and fishing for their livelihood.

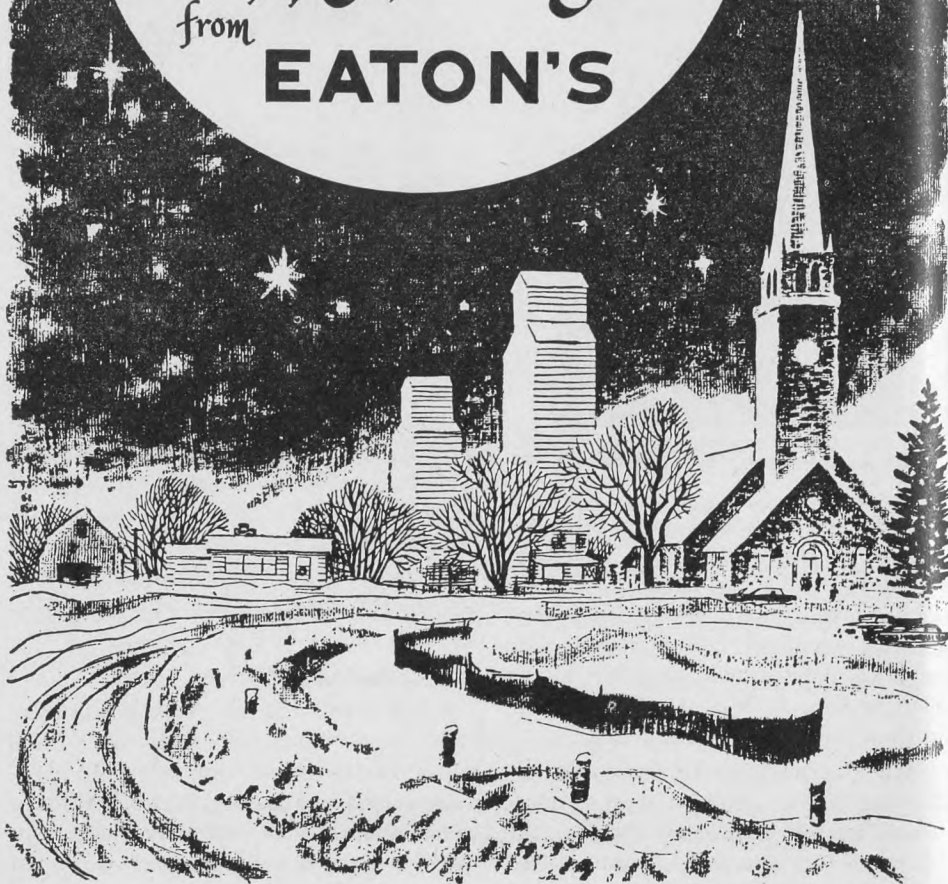
Her husband, Bjarni, learned from other venturesome seamen, of the land of opportunity across the North Atlantic. Anticipating opposition from his wife and mother of his three children, if he suggested their migrating to the New World, Bjarni left without informing her. A friend took a parting message to be delivered after he was well out at sea. The message was that he would send for her as soon as he could.

Sailed for America

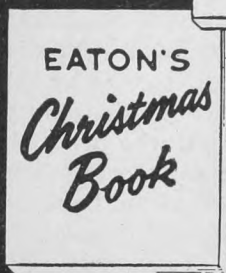
Mail service from America to Iceland more than 55 years ago, was on a catch-as-catch-can schedule. Letters might reach there two or three times a year, provided they made connection with a sailing vessel or tramp steamer.

The old wish ...
the true wish ...

Merry Christmas
AND
Happy New Year
from
EATON'S



YOUR YEAR 'ROUND SHOPPING GUIDES



IT PAYS TO SHOP AT EATON'S

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—Guides to Satisfying Quality Backed by EATON'S
Guarantee! You will find it convenient and money-
saving to shop at EATON'S through the Mail Order,
every season in the year. Keep your name on the
EATON Mailing List by regular orders from the
Catalogues—It Pays!

THE T. EATON CO. LIMITED
WINNIPEG CANADA

Sailed for America

A letter received from her husband informed Mrs. Gudmundson that he was in Winnipeg, Canada. After a year or more of waiting she decided to join him. Leaving one of the children with relatives, she sailed with another, 3 years old and a baby of a year.

She did not have the address of her husband in Winnipeg and spoke but a few words in English but she was not one to be stopped by obstacles. Through others of Icelandic origin in that Canadian settlement she located Barney, as he was then and is now known. A boom was on in Winnipeg. There was a demand for carpenters and cabinet maker—such as Barney. They remained there three years and another child was born.

But the venturesome and pioneer spirit of the Vikings asserted itself. Winnipeg was becoming too metropolitan, so they went into the wilds of Saskatchewan. The railway terminal was at Yorkton. They got a wagon to take them 75 miles farther to a place which may be found on some maps—called Foam Lake. It was just a lake then and the foam was ice for eight months of the year.

A small space was cleared in the forest on their 160-acre homestead and the tree trunks used to build a house. Their arrival had been timed for early spring so they were able to plant a few vegetables and get the house completed before the early winter cut them off from the outer world. But with garden implements, a cow to provide milk for the children and carpenter tools to help build the houses that others might require in the future—they managed.

There were wild berries, rabbits and partridge, also moose to provide all the meat they needed for the growing family. More pioneers pushed into

that far north and Foam Lake began to need houses. While Barney plied his carpenter trade, Ingibjorg did the farming and raised the family. Three more children were born there. The mother was also the school teacher. As she knew no English—or practically none, they were well grounded in the Icelandic language.

Wanderlust Comes Again

About 33 years ago Barney began getting reports of a paradise called California and decided that was the next port of call on his voyage westward. While Ingibjorg tended the family and farm he left for Los Angeles. They were united again two years later.

Following various hardships, came the national depression of 1929. Although they were then naturalized citizens of this country, they were not the kind who believed the state or the community owed them a living. The mother of the family, now 10 in number—routed them out at 4.30 a.m. each day and sent them on their way to find work. She took a large house and arranged with the county charities authorities to care for delinquent boys.

For almost 10 years she maintained this place—never having less than six of the wayward lads in her care.

The mother of a large family herself, she knew the value of discipline and how to inculcate in boys a regard for law and order. The county authorities praised her highly for having saved many youths from what could have been the downward path. Today several successful business men of the Southland pay occasional visits to their “mother Ingibjorg” and thank her for her loving guidance.

Her Sons in Service

Of her 10 children, two daughters

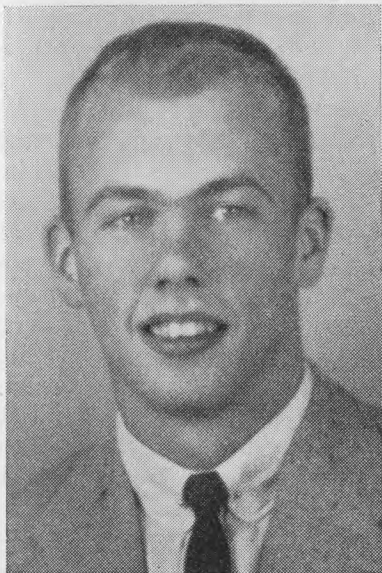
and seven sons are living. Two sons served in World War I and three in World War II. Having had virtually no education as a child—and having taught herself and her own brood when young, she saw to it that they received university training and most of them masters' degrees. One, until recently, was a language professor in Santa Barbara College, another, with a degree in theology, served as Army chaplain and now minister of a church in Brea, Calif.

Several years ago "mother Ingibjorg" acquired a home in Sunland because the climate was recommended for one of the family. Having an astute sense of real estate values she bought and sold other properties and accumulated enough to assure her a comfortable income today.

With the material affairs now provided for; "mother Ingibjorg" devoted most of her time to writing — mostly on spiritual and moral themes. She is a staunch believer in Christian precepts as the foundation for character. Her writings appear in the periodicals of Iceland. The Bishop of the island and several of the leading scholars are her regular correspondents. Eight years ago, she and her husband celebrated their golden wedding anniversary, attended by children and grandchildren.

As a striking and rare example of a courageous and indefatigable person who shames many of our modern women by her record of obstacles overcome—a Mention of Merit is due "mother Ingibjorg" Gudmundson—of Sunland.

Distinguished Scholar



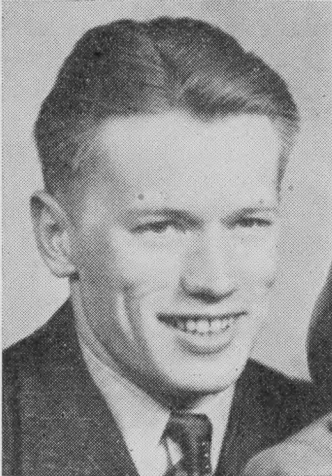
Three university entrance bursaries were awarded to **Duncan Thomas**

McWhirter, a graduate of the Fort William Collegiate Institute. The Fort William-Port Arthur Kiwanis club awarded Duncan the Kiwanis bursary of \$300 for each of the two years of university attendance. From Toronto came a \$300 University College entrance bursary and a \$400 Atkinson Foundation bursary. In addition to his high academic standing, Duncan has been prominent in the extra curricular program of his school. He was associate editor of the Oracle, the school year book, member of the Boys' Athletic Society executive and the Drama Club, and a member of the senior football team.

Duncan is the son of Mr. and Mrs. R. J. McWhirter of 742 Bessie Ave. His mother, Gudrun is the daughter of the late Thomas Benjaminsson and his widow Soffia, of Lundar.

"HO— — — SOCKEYE !!"

by **WALTER VOPNFORD**



Walter Vopnford

Today I would like to turn back the pages of time a few months and take you to spend a day aboard a purse seine boat in the waters of beautiful Puget Sound, in north-western Washington. We're going to fish for sockeye salmon. Before we start out on our adventure, let me, for a few minutes, brief you on what has been leading up to this memorable day. This is not going to be a mythical day—it actually happened — I was there!

In June of this year, as happens in June of every year, the waterfronts of the fishing towns in this area were scenes of bustling activity. The fishing fleet was making preparations to scramble for its share of the famed Adams River sockeye run. The International Sockeye Commission had made predictions that ten million fish would return. This meant that the American fishermen would be allowed to take five million, and the balance would go to the Canadians. Five million fish, valued at approximately

\$2.00 each. Ten million dollars to be divided among the owners and crew members of the fishing fleet! Small wonder that along the docks there was an air of expectancy.

Around the net-sheds crews were busy sewing and assembling the big salmon nets. This is the most important job of all; to a large extent the success of the coming season depends on the quality and strength of the nets. Skippers watched every step of the process, measuring and re-measuring as the seine takes shape.

Down by the docks, other jobs were being done. Skiff engines and boat engines were being tuned up, rigging inspected and replaced if necessary, and the boats being repaired and painted.

The opening of the season found all the boats ready and out on the fishing grounds. Week after week passed, but returns were small. There just weren't enough fish to give many boats in the huge fleet any appreciable catch. Long, hard days were put in by the crews, but at the end of each week the share per man hardly averaged \$50.00. Finally towards the end of August, stories came drifting in on the short wave radio that increasing numbers of fish were being caught off the west coast of Vancouver Island by the big Canadian seiners. As the days went by, the "fish stories" grew bigger. Enormous catches were being made. The run was on the way!

August the 29th found us fishing just off Point Roberts, the last place that the American boats can get a chance at the sockeye before they head up the Fraser river to spawn. Sunday,

Monday and Tuesday were good. By Tuesday night we had shared about \$400.00, per man for the week, and hopes were high for a good season.

But let's wait a minute. I promised to take you aboard and let you share in some of the excitement. You'd better come aboard tonight so you will

a bit. There is not much activity in the fleet, so we had better have some breakfast. It is marvellous what some fresh salt air and good hard work does to a man's appetite. Before the last man is fed we've used up two dozen eggs, two pounds of bacon, and about four dozen hotcakes. All this for just



Fishing fleet off Point Roberts

be with us first thing in the morning. It's early to bed for a fisherman, for he will be up and at work at the crack of dawn.

Wednesday, September the first. It's a beautiful morning, the sun is just beginning to peep over the top of Mount Baker. There seems to be quite a bit of activity in the fishing fleet. Several boats already have their nets in the water, and others are scurrying around looking for fish. Look over there! There are fish all over the place! The captain has seen them too, and now our net is in the water and we are fishing. It's about an hour and a half later and our first catch is aboard. Five hundred fish. It's a good start—maybe we'll have a couple of thousand before the day is over.

Things appear to be slowing down

seven men! We can't linger too long over this last cup of coffee; the fish are showing up again. Let's get out on deck and look around. Maybe we can make another haul as good as the last one.

Do you see that fish jump over there? Say, there's another one, and another. What's the matter with the skipper? Why isn't he setting that net out? Look! There's even more fish over there. Here we go! The net is going out. Now we're towing, the little skiff on one end, and the boat on the other. Eighteen hundred feet of net laid out approximately in the shape of a horseshoe, and the fish are jumping in a steady stream straight for our net. Now they're jumping inside our net! Listen to the crew shout. We're going to close up our net now, and see

if we can save all the fish we have. Now we're going to start pulling the net back aboard, and what a pull it is going to be. Never is work more pleasant than when one knows the reward is going to be rich. There they are, fellows—we can't pull in any more net—we'll have to start brailing them aboard. The sockeye are so thick that they are splashing water all over us, but there isn't a man who cares.

Now the fish are in the hold and the guessing game starts. How many fish did we get? How much do we share? There is only one thing for sure. We will have to find a buyer and unload, for the boat will hold no more. We've loaded her! Our decks are almost awash.

Here comes our tender, and now we shall start the work of pitching off our fish. It takes about two hours, and when we're through, it's the tender that rides low in the water. We have unloaded 4500 sockeye, that averaged over seven pounds each. Over 30,000

pounds of fish, and we caught most of them in one haul. What a wonderful day—over \$900.00 share per man. No doubt some boats caught more fish than we did, but we're happy. Maybe we won't catch an appreciable amount of fish again this season, but one thing is sure. After the thrill of a catch like this, you can rest assured that when next season rolls around, and the boys start working on the fishing gear again—We'll be there!

WALTER VOPNFORD—born in Winnipeg July 1st, 1918. Parents: Mrs. Dagbjört Vopnfjörð of Blaine, Washington, and the late Jacob Vopnfjörð formerly of Winnipeg. Brought up and educated in Winnipeg and Blaine. Married Sigrid Gudmundson of Point Roberts. Three children, David, Danny, and Linda. Owner and operator of South Beach Resort, Point Roberts. Choir leader and soloist at the Point Roberts Lutheran Church. At present time Sigrid and Wally are attending a teacher-training institution in Bellingham, Washington.

Fisherman, business man, teacher.
 "Yet all experience is an arch where thro'
 Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin
 fades
 For ever and for ever when I move."

WAR SERVICE RECORD

In Memoriam

Cpl. Laxdal was born on November 18, 1918. In March, 1941 he enlisted in the 8th Reconnaissance Army Tank Corps, and took his training at Huntingdon, Quebec. He embarked for overseas in July, 1941, and was killed while on duty in England, September 16, 1941.

His father, Mr. Egill J. Laxdal, who resides at Wynyard, Saskatchewan, passed away on August 25, 1954.



Cpl. R. J. Laxdal

My Flight to Iceland

by ROSA BENEDIKTSSON

(Continued from Autumn issue)

On Wednesday afternoon we left our hotel and two buses transferred us to Idelwyld Airport. Here we boarded the Icelandic Airliner "Hekla" and as we ascended we were each presented with a rose from Iceland.

We landed at Gander Airport at mid-night, where a banquet spread awaited us. We had a 3 hour stop, so we had time to send cards and letters home. The journey across the Atlantic was uneventful. We flew high over banks of clouds which had the appearance of mountains. It was noon when we arrived at Reykjavík, and after circling the city a few times we landed at Reykjavík Airport, just outside the city. There were throngs of people to welcome us and just after descending, I was presented with a huge bouquet of roses by the Prime Minister's wife. Immediately I was whisked away to what was to be my home during most of my stay in the city—but not before a radio man encountered me. My hostess was frú Ágústa Jóhannsdóttir, daughter of an old neighbor of mine, Jóhann Bjarnason. Her husband is Guðmundur Halldórsson. So when I was shown to my room, among all the photos of my old neighbors, I felt very much at home. Their residence was a lovely large stucco house and it had every modern convenience, including an automatic dishwasher. I have very pleasant memories of my stay there and was made to feel like one of the family.

The city of Reykjavík is similar to any modern bustling city of 60,000 residents except for the absence of railways— Iceland has none. But bus

and taxi service is excellent in the city, and chartered and regular bus routes are established all over the country, as well as air routes. Of course, the old streets are narrow and crooked but the modern buildings and residential sections in the newer areas certainly are a credit to any nation and the city presents a tidy appearance throughout, with flowers in profusion which grow so magnificently there. As always there are mountains in the background, one of them the Esja, being a particular favorite. The Tjörn, or Pool, in the centre of the city makes a pleasing picture, its waters teeming with waterfowl. The city is heated by hot water from hot springs some 10 miles distant, which is piped into huge reservoirs just outside the city and from there into the heating systems of the houses.

The group went on a 3 day tour of the south land and covered points of interest including old faithful Geysir, Gullfoss and the ancient site of the world's first parliament, Þingvellir. We also attended various social functions. The last night we were together before dispersing, we attended the National Opera House where we saw Verdi's *La Traviata* performed by an all Icelandic cast, with the exception of one Norwegian star. Even though I didn't understand the Italian language, I was spellbound by the music, the performance and scenery. The National Opera House was erected recently, and is a beautiful structure with a unique pattern distinctly its own, designed by

one of Iceland's leading architects, now deceased.

Next day was the 17th of June, the National Holiday. It was a grand day all around. It began with a church service in the Dome Church. There was an address by the president delivered from the balcony of Government House, an address by the Maid of the Mountains, singing, and a lengthy programme of sports. In the evening everyone danced in the streets, to the music of three loud orchestras in different parts of the city and I enjoyed being one of that happy crowd. Before morning all the streets had been cleared of debris and everyone was ready for business as usual.

Next morning I left for the north of Iceland. The party consisted of the Prime Minister, Steingrímur Steinþórsson, his wife Theódóra, Ólafur from Hellulandi, a farmer from the north, the chauffeur and myself. Our means of conveyance was the Government car, a Buick 8, 1953 model. We journeyed till evening, stopping only for lunch at Blönduós, a small fishing village. Even though Iceland is only 160 miles from north to south, the journey was much longer. There are mountains to cross and the roads go along the coast. Some of the fjords go far inland making the distance much greater.

A number of people had gathered at Arnarstapi, where the Cenotaph was to be erected, near my father's birthplace. An address of welcome was delivered by the sýslumaður, S. Sigurðsson and I was presented with a beautiful bouquet of roses after which we proceeded to Sauðárkrókur, which is a small fishing village nearby, right underneath the majestic old Tindastóll mountain. There a banquet awaited us at Villa Nova Hotel.

During my stay in the Northern part of Iceland, which lasted about

four weeks, I travelled extensively in those areas where my parents were born and lived, the Skagafjarðar- and Þingeyjarsýsla. The scenery is varied and many wonders of nature to see.

The Mývatn or Mosquito Lake area, although bearing such an unattractive name, has a particularly varied landscape. The lake is quite large, dotted with islands. There are numerous hills or small mountains, at that time clad in green, but the tops are burnt as though there had been volcanic eruptions there recently. Various pillars and strange formations of lava and numerous mountains form a background for the scene. Iceland can truly be said to be a tourists' delight, for as you travel there is a new surprise awaiting you around every turn of the road. But if you revel in broad fields of grain, they are not to be found. I saw a couple of grain fields and they compared quite favorably with ours at that time, early in June. But there are lush meadows and the grass is very fine, takes a lot of curing and can be cut twice. Sheep raising is the big agricultural industry. To me it seemed an easy way of raising sheep. In the spring they are turned out and driven up the mountain side. In the fall they are herded together fat as butter. They have community corrals and in the fall when the sheep are sorted, they have the "réttir", which is always a big event.

As I travelled over the countryside enjoying the boundless hospitality of the people I was impressed with their sense of well-being and amazed at the comfortable homes wherever I went. They have hydro in 80% of the homes in the land and all the homes I visited had plumbing. There were steam heated houses even far out on the mountains, such as "Grímsstaðir á Fjalli". What strikes your attention on ent-

ering the homes is the rows and rows of books and landscape paintings on the walls.

I took a plane back from Akureyri Airport, which is close to the town of the same name in Northern Iceland. That only took a little more than an hour. Seeing the land from the air, you realize what a rocky little isle it is.

After I got back to Reykjavík, I was very busy, in what you might term a social whirl. All my time was taken up attending coffee parties, afternoons and evenings. I also visited museums, various institutions and points of interest in the city.

Of course the highlight of my journey was the unveiling of the Cenotaph for my late father. The event was fixed for Sunday, July 19th, so the day before, Frú Ágústa, her husband, Guðmundur, the Prime Minister's wife, their son and I, set out for Skagafjörður again at 2 p.m., and arrived at Sauðárkróki at about 12.30 p.m. There was one stop for lunch at a new hotel up country by the name of Bifröst.

At 2 p.m. on Sunday, about two thousand people had gathered at Arnarstapi for the unveiling. The place where the Cenotaph was erected was on a small mountain, near my father's birth place and overlooking the beautiful Skagafjörður. The highway goes right past there and at the foot of the mountain a swift little stream rushes by.

The weather was just ideal and everyone felt very comfortable sitting on the mossy hillsides while the lengthy programme was in progress. It was a very impressive ceremony, and to me it will always remain a hallowed memory. To have the privilege of being present when a whole nation paid tribute to the memory of my late father, filled my heart with gratitude. And as I sat and listened to the

beautiful singing, the poems that were read and the speeches that were delivered, my only regrets were that my father's friends in North America and especially Markerville, could not be present. The unveiling took place after the first speech and I was escorted up the mountain to the Cenotaph by two members of the Young Peoples Society, which was responsible for the ceremony. All the proceedings were tape-recorded. The programme lasted till 6 p.m. when there was a banquet at a nearby hotel. There were after-dinner speeches and as always at banquets, there was singing. I was presented with a silver serving spoon from the community of Skagafjörður. Earlier the Y. P. society had presented me with a set of old Icelandic Sagas. At about 8 p.m. we set off for Reykjavík, arriving at the city at 4.30 a.m. It was a beautiful night, the weather ideal and almost as bright as day. Iceland touches the Arctic circle and for a month before and after June 21, the midnight sun keeps the night bright as day.

The following days in Reykjavík I spent enjoying the warm hospitality of friends and relations, and I can assure you I was treated right royally. All the Western Icelanders had the same story to tell. Wherever they travelled they met with the utmost courtesy and consideration.

Sunday, July 26th, was the day set for our departure for home. We were to leave at 2 p.m., but due to a leaky gas tank, we did not get away until midnight. The airship was not our Hekla, but an older model on lease from Norway. We got a royal send-off amid cheering crowds, all of us ladies carrying huge bouquets.

The flight across the Atlantic was perfect, not a cloud in the sky and not the slightest breeze. We flew low

and the full moon glistened on the silver sea below. The sunrise was superb! We landed at Gander in time for breakfast and arrived in New York at Forrest Hotel in the late afternoon. Due to a Jehovah Witness convention in New York we were delayed in getting a flight to Winnipeg till Wednesday.

We relaxed and enjoyed ourselves immensely, left our hotel Wednesday morning and arrived in Winnipeg at 10 p.m. after only one stop of 3 hours duration at Malton.

I have a deep and sincere regard for Iceland and its people after making their acquaintance, and it seems like a second homeland to me. But I admire the foresight of my grandparents who, when they decided to emigrate, chose North America as their future home, and especially am I grateful that my parents chose to reside in Alberta, where I was born.

I shall always feel deeply indebted to all those kind people who made this wonderful trip possible for me.

GUSTAF KRISTJANSON

NEW CBC DRAMA PRODUCER



Gustaf Kristjanson, who started working for the C.B.C. in 1947 has made rapid progress. In August, 1954, he was transferred to Winnipeg to become C.B.C. drama producer for the Prairie Region.

Gustaf graduated from the University of Saskatchewan in 1939 and the following year obtained his certificate in education. He taught high school for two years in his native province of Saskatchewan and in 1941 joined the navy where he served to the end of World War II.

The stage and drama attracted the young man and soon after demobilization in 1946 he began free-lance acting and writing for the CBC in Toronto. He wrote and narrated a CBC children's series and performed in a number of drama productions. From 1948 to 1952 he was a script writer in the CBC drama department, doing some executive producing on the

side. From 1952 to 1954, on leave of absence from the CBC, he served as a school Relations Officer with the navy.

Gustaf Kristjanson is the son of Hákon and Gudny (nee Solmundson) Kristjansson, formerly of Wynyard and Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and now of Vancouver, B. C. Hákon is a brother of Mrs. Hólmfríður Pétursson, widow of the late Dr. Rögnvaldur Pétursson. Gustaf is married and has two children, a girl of twelve and a boy of nine.

BEST ALL-ROUND CADET

The Van Der Smitten-Ridout Award for the best all-round cadet, morally intellectually and physically, this year was awarded to **Jon H. F. Jennekins**, in a ceremony on the parade square at Royal Military College, Kingston. Thirty prizes were awarded among 78 cadets of the graduating class who paraded before inspecting officer Air Vice-Marshal R. F. Miller, of Ottawa.

Jon is the son of Mrs. Lara (Thorvaldson) Jennekins, formerly of Lundar.

Dr. A. H. S. Gillson

In a letter, which the Icelandic poet, Jónas Hallgrímsson, wrote to his friend Páll Melsted Junior, from Copenhagen July 5, 1844, Hallgrímsson gives a description of the Danish poet, J. C. Hauch, which in part reads as follows: "H. is a very lovable person; he is tall, slender and ungainly in build, extremely dark and southern in complexion, and, as you may recall, though homely, nevertheless most charming, and one has only to glance at him to see what a brilliant mind he has."

This description has remained in my memory ever since I read it and unconsciously came to mind when I saw Dr. Gillson for the first time the day after I arrived in Winnipeg. It was on a Saturday morning, at the close of a busy week for the president, and it seemed as if the restfulness of the approaching holiday was beginning to have its effect. He was in excellent spirits and our relations were from the first most cordial and remained so to the last.

Dr. Gillson was a sensitive man with a touch of impetuosity, who made friends easily and was loyal to those he accepted. If he disagreed with men he stated his position clearly and forcefully for he was without guile and therefore did not conceal his feelings.

He early became impressed with the idea of an Icelandic Chair at the University and gave the project his wholehearted support whenever it was needed. Although he specialized in mathematics and astronomy these were not his only interests, for he devoted himself as well to both art and literature. Where his knowledge in these matters failed him, he was guided by

the intuition of the truly educated man, who allows few things to surprise him. He knew what emphasis has been placed in Icelandic studies in his motherland, England, and he con-



Dr. A. H. S. Gillson

sidered their value of equal importance here. He realized that the University of Manitoba was a most logical place for these studies, because Icelandic is still—to a certain extent—a living language in the province and the facilities for studying it are in that respect unique. Finally he understood how important it was to give Icelandic at once its proper place within the University system and the last thing we discussed before his retirement was the question of securing the most favourable conditions for the pursuit of Icelandic studies.

When I now recall my acquaintance with Dr. Gillson, I remember particularly his eloquence both in private and public. The presidential office is a

most demanding one. The president must give his attention to many and varied matters. He must be both omniscient and omnipresent, and his mind and memory have to be constantly alert, so that nothing may escape him. The board of governors, the teaching staff and the student body are some times at variance, and then the president must be the intermediary who stills the troubled waters. His waiting-room is often thronged and he discourses knowledgeably with everybody.

Dr. Gillson was an excellent chairman and never allowed discussions to wander far from the matter in question. He handled a gathering in the same way as a skilled rider handles his steed. On formal occasions his manner was most dignified, and I remember especially his fine performance at the ceremonies in connection with the opening of the new University Library. At banquets and other festivities he was the very soul of gaiety and the spirits of everybody rose when he began to speak.

The ancient Greeks laid great emphasis on the necessity of eloquence and at the same time on actual deeds. The words of the old charioteer Phoenix, which he once addressed to the great Achilles, are well known:

"Did not the old charioteer Peleus make me your guardian when he sent you off from Phthia to join Agamemnon? You were young then, with no experience of the hazards of war, nor

of debate, where people make their mark. It was to teach you all these things, to make of you an orator and a man of action, that he sent me with you."

Although Dr. Gillson was perhaps more the orator than the man of action, he managed to accomplish many things during his time as president. One building after another was erected on the campus and the activities of the University increased and flourished in many ways. Closer relationship was established by the University with the people of the province, and Dr. Gillson was untiring in travelling through Manitoba, making countless contacts and bringing knowledge to the public about this their highest institution of learning. He proclaimed that the University should reflect the culture and customs of the many groups of the province and that the University should help them to preserve and strengthen both.

The Icelanders in Manitoba recall Dr. Gillson's visits to their settlements and many of them came to know him personally. The influence of such an acquaintance will also be of lasting quality as time passes: the memory of a warm handshake, a friendly smile and encouraging words lives long after the man has gone. I shall always miss Dr. Gillson and find the University an emptier place without him.

Finnbogi Guðmundsson

President Ásgeirsson of Iceland has laid the cornerstone of a new fertilizer plant in the land of our forefathers. This large industrial enterprise was

built in only two years at the cost of 120 million krónur, much of it Marshall aid.

Two Judges Receive Acclamations

In the United States many public offices are in the gift of the people on election day. Judgeships in state courts are in that category. As a rule the contests are not very strenuous and are mostly based on the personal qualities of the candidate rather than any public issues. If a candidate were a sitting member on the bench, his record would be given careful thought by the electors.

We, of Canada, know how seldom it happens that a candidate for election is given an acclamation. That happens only when the opposition deems the situation hopeless.

It was, therefore, very gratifying to hear that in the recent elections in the United States no opposition was offered to Associate Justice Nels A. Johnson of the Supreme Court of North Dakota nor to Judge Asmundur Benson of the District Court of the same State. All other aspirants must have felt that the record of these judges on the bench and their reputation in the State provided a handicap they could not overcome. As a result Associate Justice Johnson has been elected for four years, the unexpired term of the late Judge Christianson and Judge Benson has been elected for a full term of six years.

These two judges have a good deal in common. Both grew up in North Dakota. Asmundur was born there and Nels was four years old when he came with his parents from Iceland. Both spent their childhood in the Mouse River district, which is not choice agricultural land, shown by the fact that a large part of the district was bought by the government of the United States for a bird sanctuary. The parents of

both lacked means to give the promising boys a higher education. But here, as in the case of so many second generation Icelanders, the poverty of the parents did not prove a deterrent. These young men had to finance their way through high school and the university. They worked during the summer months and at times were not able to start at the opening of the fall term, but zeal and innate ability soon made up for the lost time.



Nels A. Johnson

Nels A. Johnson was born at Akranes, Iceland, on April 30, 1896, and four years later his parents migrated to North Dakota. His father took a homestead in the Mouse River district. It was rather poor land and the lot of his parents was the toil and sweat of the pioneer. That merely steeled them to give of their best and serve unselfishly in that district of marginal land. They brought up a family of five child-

ren, a daughter and four sons all of whom are citizens of distinction. The daughter Lilja is the wife of Rev. Dr. V. J. Eylands, pastor of the First Lutheran church in Winnipeg. Two brothers, Olafur and Christian, are doctors practising in Rugby, and the third brother, Einar, is a lawyer practising in Lacota, North Dakota.

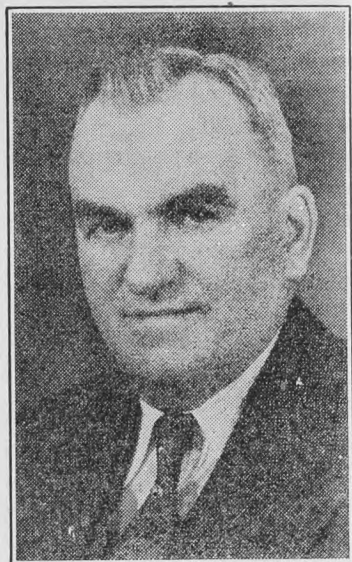
Nels attended public school in the Mouse River district and high school in Bottineau. He then entered the University of North Dakota. World War I. interfered, and he served over two years in the American army. He was at the battlefield in France for sixteen months, and was mentioned in despatches for heroic devotion to duty. On returning Nels Johnson resumed his studies at the university, made up for time lost overseas, completed his Arts course and then took up law. He graduated in Law with high honours, and was granted the degree of Juris Doctor. He practised successively in Leeds, Minnawauken and Towner. He was state's attorney in MacHenry County for nine years and in 1944, when he was elected attorney general of North Dakota, he moved to Bismarck and served as attorney general for four years.

In April 1954 he was appointed by Governor N. Brunsdale to fill the vacancy in the Supreme Court caused by the death of Associate Justice A. M. Christianson. Upon acceptance the new judge announced that he would be a candidate in the ensuing elections for the Supreme Court on the no-party ticket. But, as already stated, no one ventured to oppose him.

In 1931 Nels Johnson married Ruth Margery Hallenbeck. They have two children, George M. attending the University of North Dakota and a daughter, Margot, at present taking

her final year in the Bismarck High School.

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Asmundur Benson

Asmundur Benson was born at Akra on July 28, 1885 but while still a small boy moved with his parents to the Mouse River district. He is reported to be one of the first of the children of the pioneers in that district who decided to acquire a university education. This took courage and determination, qualities with which he is richly endowed, and he may be said to have blazed a trail which many another Mouse River boy of those days followed on his way to distinction and honour.

Asmundur graduated in Law in 1915, and opened an office in Bottineau where he practised until April 26, 1954, when Gov. N. Brunsdale appointed him judge of the Second Judicial District to succeed Judge Harold B. Nelson who retired. Judge Nelson's term would have expired at the end of this year so it became necessary for

Judge Benson to place his name before the electors in the United States elections last month. Again there was no opposition.

During his years of busy practice Asmundur Benson found time for public service in his community. He served on the Bottineau Town Council for ten years and was state's attorney for Bottineau County for four years. He has for years been on the Board of Directors of the Lutheran Home for the Aged in Minot and has been on the Board of Directors of the Icelandic Old Folk's Home at Moun-

tain since it was built a few years ago.

In 1916 Asmundur married Sigridur, a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gudmundur Freeman, for many years one of the leading families in the Mouse River district. They have two daughters, Mrs. A. R. Coleman of Pasadena, Cali., and Mrs. A. R. Hawkins Jr. of North Carolina.

The Icelandic Canadian extends congratulations to these two new judges and records a conviction rather than a mere hope that their service on the bench will enhance their already acquired fine reputation. **W. J. L.**

BOOKS REVIEW

ÆVISAGA HELGA EINARSSONAR,

Helgi Einarson, Reykjavík, 1954, pp. 216.

The author of this book was one of the small group of Icelandic people that first settled in the Lundar district on the east shore of Lake Manitoba in the summer of 1887. He later became widely known as an ambitious and venturesome pioneer in that most hazardous of occupations, the trading and fish buying business in Manitoba.

Begun some 34 years ago at St. Martin this autobiography gives a disjointed but none the less a reasonably full account of a man who rightfully belongs in the company of the doughty Inter-lake pioneers of the stamp of Ásmundur M. Freeman and the late Björn Mathews to mention but two of those whose names come most readily to mind. All had in common the basic pioneering qualities of physical strength, stamina and courage to which were here added drive, ambition and aptness. Many of their business ventures were, to be sure more

distinguished by daring than discernment and in the case of Helgi Einarsson the financial returns were certainly never commensurate with the prodigious energy which he expended in trying to maintain his little trading empire on the fringes of our northern lakes. That the Booth millions and Hugh Armstrong, the canny Scot, would between them ultimately drive the Icelandic fisherman to the wall was a fore-gone conclusion but the account of his battle with the giants is a story well worth the telling and together with other episodes equally interesting, justifies the publication of this book.

Helgi Einarsson was born in Iceland in the year 1870 and came to Canada with his parents at the age of seventeen. The family settled near the present townsite of Lundar as previously noted but moved to the Narrows two years later to become pioneers in a new district for the second time. The only Iclander to precede them was Bjarni Kristjansson who the year before had hired out to William Sifton, a kinsman of Sir Clifford, on the west

side of the Narrows, operate a ranch and carried on a big business with the railways in supplying them with railroad ties cut in the heavy bush along the lake shore. The author speaks very highly of Sifton and his family, and states that the new immigrants received much help and advice from them.

Helgi Einarsson who went fishing on Lake Manitoba in the fall of 1887 has followed that occupation ever since in one form or another. He built in 1897 or thereabouts, the first ice house on the lake for the preservation of the summer catch and in the early twenties became the first man to ship unfrozen winter caught fish from Manitoba to the markets in the United States. He also engaged in trade and had at one time 6 or 7 trading posts, most of them on Lake Manitoba.

In his introduction, which is incidentally a model of brevity, our author expresses the wish that his book may be instrumental in making the reader a wiser and better man. How this might come about is not clear for the *Ævisaga*, though written by an Icelander of the old school, contains but little moralizing and the passages embodying the author's philosophy and religious beliefs are mercifully brief. What the reader will find is an honest and often interesting account of the life of a rugged and resourceful man, who has a very special place in the story of the Icelandic Interlake settlement and is remembered with respect and affection by all who knew him.

By his own admission Helgi Einarsson never received the training considered necessary for an author, and as a result the book lacks pattern and polish. But Helgi is a good narrator and many of the episodes are very well told. There is also reason to believe

that his memory is trustworthy, which makes the book valuable as source material for the story of the Lake Manitoba settlements. The writer has checked a good many of the statements of fact relating to historical events and found the author to be right in almost all cases. There may be some doubt about the chronology particularly in the latter part of the book but they are rarely far out. In this connection it might be mentioned that the book abounds in sentences or phrases such as "that summer—", "The next winter—", etc. In one case the writer had to go back a full 30 pages before he was certain what year was referred to. This is very tiring to say the least, and distracts greatly from the enjoyment of reading.

In conclusion it should be mentioned that this is perhaps the first serious work ever written in that admixture of Icelandic and English known as Western Icelandic or "*Vestur-íslenska*", and although the effect is not too jarring to our Western sensibilities, formidable obstacles were placed in the way of the proof-reader who in this case was unacquainted with our colloquial speech. The result is that the book abounds in errors, particularly where English words or phrases are used. A few of the most glaring mistakes are: "mascake" for muskeg, "peller" for pedlar, "cattle mortgage", for chattel mortgage and "centur-board" for centre board. Place names and personal names are on the other hand correctly rendered for the most part. Two exceptions maybe noted i.e. "Herdingli" for Headingly and "Berings River" for Berens River. In spite of all this Helgi is to be commended for his energy and determination in getting his book published. Other old timers might well follow his example.

H. Th.

THE AGE OF THE STURLUNGS

Einar Ól. Sveinsson. Translated by Jóhann S. Hannesson, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 1953. 180 pp.

The Age of the Sturlungs is a scholarly and very readable survey of Icelandic civilization in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the period of transition from Commonwealth to royal domain. This age was "not only one of the most fateful periods in the history of Iceland, but also one of the most remarkable stages in the development of its culture."

The author presents a panorama of the life of the people, political, religious, social and economic, and cultural. He gives a picture of law and justice, amusements and entertainment, and travel abroad. With keen psychological insight, he portrays the inner life of the people, their mood and their temper. He gives a picture of the Icelandic character of the saga age, the spirit of independence, belief in manly virtues, eagerness for glory and renown, strong sense of justice and moderation, thirst for travel abroad, capacity for "sweet mirth and bitter jest", and attitude to death.

The author has the historian's sense of perspective, and the Icelandic scene is viewed against the large background of Europe of the day. By no means does Iceland suffer from the comparison made, as in the case of Icelandic and Italian morals.

Classes and class relationship are featured, the growth of power and gain in wealth of the feudal chieftains, the loss of power of the free and independent spirited farmer, or the *thingmenn* class, and the growing poverty of a latter class. The Sturlung family, notably, set their mark on the age.

The broad view of the age emphasizes that despite the prominence of the feuds of the chieftains, the mass of the people stood aloof from these quarrels and desired peace and that the feuding aristocrats also made a great contribution in the field of letters. "It is the age of Snorri Sturluson and his *Edda* and *Heimskringla*, the age of all the anonymous masters who wrote the Icelandic Sagas." The influence of the times on the writing of the sagas is studied. The earlier sagas feature both manly prowess and intellectual achievement and show keen insight into character, while the later sagas reflect less experience of life and a loss of the sense of reality.

Characterization is good. Historic characters throng the pages. Snorri Sturluson, Jón Loftsson, Gizzur Thorvaldsson, Thórhur Kakali, Bishop Arni Thorláksson, Sturla of Hvammi, Abbott Brandur Jónsson, and many others, are real persons and vividly portrayed.

The influence of the Roman Catholic church is clearly shown. An alien militant church gains power and Bishop Arni's code of church law specifies in detail what the freedom loving and independent spirited Icelanders must believe. As the gentle humane Christianity of the twelfth century dies and the old married priest attached to the soil is replaced by the militant celibate of an international, and not an Icelandic church, there results a marked division in Icelandic life.

The history relates the determination of Icelandic civilization as the church establishes its separate world and the Norwegian kings establish their sway in the land.

The reader lays down the book with the thought that the curtain has been parted to give a view of a most interesting period and a most interesting

assembly of men, whom one would wish to know much better.

"The drama is, to be sure, a tragedy; it moves towards collapse and disaster. But no one can fail to preceive its magnitude. The life it represents is indeed terrifying, but there is nothing small or narrow about it. If anything, the spectator will find the world larger after having watched it, and there is much to see so interesting and remarkable that it is difficult to turn one's eyes again."

W. Kristjanson

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IMMORTAL ROCK

by Laura Goodman Salverson

"Ave Maria Save us from Evil". An invocation and a prayer. Here in a single line was summed up the substance and the hope of the men whose memorial was a stone, a stone erected as a tribute of affection and a testament of faith, in memory of comrades slain by savages in the wilderness.

The stone was the Kensington Stone—the "Immortal Rock" of Laura Goodman Salverson's latest novel, winner of the Ryerson Fiction Award for 1954. Many archeologists doubt the authenticity of the Kensington Stone. Whether it is a forgery or not has no bearing upon the literary merit of this book or upon its value as a piece of historical research.

There are two brief introductory chapters laid in Norway, and then the action of the story moves to North America. The remainder of the book covers the last thirty six hours in the lives of nine men, beleaguered by hostile Indians on a small island in the heart of the wilderness.

By the time the story is finished, we feel very well acquainted with this little group. We learn about their past lives and the motives which lead them to undertake this crusade.

Their spiritual leader was Father Benedict, who carved the stone as a sanctuary and confessional. A dedicated priest who had undertaken the journey to find the apostate Greenlanders and bring them back into the fold of the church. But for all his religious fervor an intensely human man, human in his feeling for young Lavrans, whom he loved as dearly as a son, a man intensely aware of his responsibility, which every great leader of a lost cause must feel towards those who have followed him to destruction.

The temporal leader was Count Jacob Darre, a wealthy nobleman who furnished the men and money for the expedition. Count Darre had little interest in the souls of the apostate Greenlanders, but as a good knight he obeyed his king. Like many an other strong self-disciplined man, Count Jacob was harsh and intolerant toward the weakness and folly of others, especially when that other happened to be his son.

Then there was the young Frank Thorvald, who had joined the expedition to escape from his tragic past. And Gisli Porse, the poet to whom "the Comforter was a misty Being with a book of luminous names in his hand."

There were Magnus and Karl, two cynical old soldiers, Ivar and Skule the inseparable friends and Grettir Jacob's Kinsman, a realist, who had been a "long time guest at the banquet of life and received his full measure of sweet and bitter fare." Finally there was the Laplander Hake, the cool and man of all work, an amazing combination of primitive superstition and modern shrewdness and common sense, who is one of the most interesting and likeable characters in the story.

Mrs. Salverson has the gift of bringing her characters to life, and by the time the reader has gone through a night and a day and a night with this group of men and shared their thoughts and memories during those last hours, they are not roughly sketched portraits found between the pages of a historical novel, but real people such as you and I might number among our friends today.

Thorvald, the black Franklin, tells us the story of his marriage and we know why he has turned his back forever upon his native Norway. We hear from the lips of those who were present, the story of Paul Knutson's expedition to Greenland and America from the day they marched for the last time through the crooked streets of the ancient city of Bergen. We listen to Gisli's account of the fight with the Greenland natives in their incredibly swift skin boats. We share their desolation over the deserted Greenland settlements, their battle with the natives in Vinland, their grief when their leader, Paul Knutson, died.

They speak of the comrades in whose memory the stone was erected, the "men found red with blood, and dead", Earl Bruse, the gallant; chivalrous Erlind, Haakon of the merry heart. We learn from Grettir the story of Earl Bruse's betrayal.

And always in the background is the sound of the Sioux war drums, the dying shriek of their tortured victims, the sense of doom, ever drawing nearer.

In the end Father Benedict came to realize that in spite of the inevitable destruction awaiting them, they had accomplished a rare thing: "We have established a united spirit . . . We Noremen fight well together, we are good comrades in arms, but that is the extent of our unity . . . What held us together were the trials we suffered in common, the sorrows that lifted us out of ourselves. That was our portion in the trail of love which is God's way of binding His worlds together . . . Let us not grieve too much. The living and the dead are closer than we think."

Father Benedict's crusade had come to naught. More than three centuries were to pass before his dream of planting the cross in the wilderness was realized. But for a moment, this little group of men represented "the forces of civilization standing like archers against the dark hosts of evil."

Their mission was a failure, but they were not defeated any more than the soldiers who held the pass at Thermopylae were defeated. Neither death nor despair can defeat such souls as these.

H. P. S.

ANNUAL SOCIAL GATHERING

Approximately one hundred and sixty people attended the third annual social gathering sponsored by the Icelandic National League, the Icelandic Canadian Club, and the Leif Eiriksson Club held at the Clifton School, Winnipeg, on November 1st, 1954.

This annual affair was instituted by Judge W. J. Lindal in 1952 for the purpose of bringing together Icelandic students and young Icelanders in general who have just completed high school or have recently arrived in the city from rural areas. It was felt that there existed no Icelandic organization

which catered to younger Icelandic Canadians. As a result they were drifting away to such an extent that it was feared that the senior clubs would collapse for lack of new members. Accordingly the Leif Eiriksson Club was organized to bring as many as possible of the young people into an Icelandic Canadian organization, so that they could and would continue in the senior clubs at a later date. The Social Gathering, therefore, is a joint effort on the part of all three clubs at which the new entrants into the schools, colleges, university, technical schools, and business organizations in the city are the guests of honor. This gathering gives these young people a first hand impression of the type of club they can join, and also the opportunity of meeting the older people of Icelandic descent in Winnipeg.

The meeting was opened by the president of the Leif Eiriksson Club, Arthur Swainson, who welcomed the guests on behalf of the junior club. A film on Iceland was shown by the National Film Board along with a film entitled, "The Seasons", depicting lakeside scenes in Ontario. An interesting novelty about this second film was that, except for a few words at the beginning, not a word was spoken thereafter, all pictures being accompanied by appropriate music. A very excellent series of colored slides was shown by Prof. Finnboði Guðmundsson of the Faculty of Icelandic Language and Literature at the University of Manitoba, taken on his sojourn in Iceland last summer.

Dr. V. J. Eylands brought greetings from the Icelandic National League of which organization he is the president. He stressed the idea that the three clubs should try to co-ordinate their activities more closely in order

that the results of their endeavours would be more noticeable and have more effect than if each club were to conduct its affairs independently. He further suggested that to carry out this project more effectively a short news letter or bulletin be published jointly by the three clubs at stated intervals conveying news and ideas to the Icelandic Canadian people in the city.

Judge W. J. Lindal, president of the Icelandic Canadian Club, pointed out that the young people in the audience should be given all the attention possible in order that they join the Leif Eiriksson club, as they are the people who will be in charge of the senior organizations in the not too distant future. He further stated that the purpose of the Icelandic group is not so much to perpetuate the Icelandic language and culture in Canada as to integrate it into the Canadian way of life and to add the riches of our heritage to the culture we are building in our country. In conclusion the Judge urged the young people present to join the Leif Eirikson Club at the earliest opportunity, which many of them did at the meeting held Nov. 9th.

The last speaker of the evening was Mr. Halldor J. Stefansson who thanked the National Film Board for showing these films to the gathering.

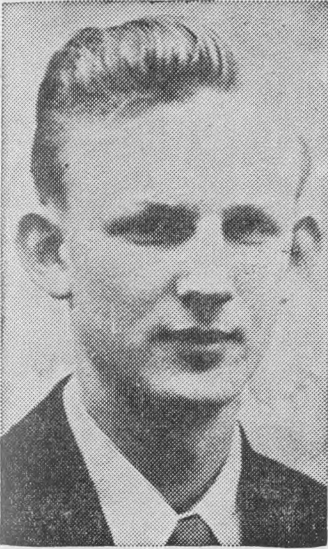
Lunch was served and an informal hour was spent discussing the work of the various clubs represented at the meeting.

The organizers of the gathering wish to thank all those who attended for their co-operation, and wish to state that they feel that the evening was a complete success. It is their present intention to continue this pleasurable function for years to come.

Arthur Swainson

IN THE NEWS

SCHOLARSHIP CANDIDATE



David MacLennan

Studies, football, and celebrations rounded out a week in Toronto last November for **David MacLennan**, of Swan River, Manitoba's candidate for the T. Eaton Co. agricultural scholarship, comprising four years' tuition at any Canadian agricultural college with fees and board paid. David lost out to an Ontario boy in the finals, but it was a close race.

A candidate was selected to represent each province. Other Manitoba finalists were Don Tole, Pilot Mound; Rodney Fry, Dauphin; and Allan Hay, Foxwarren.

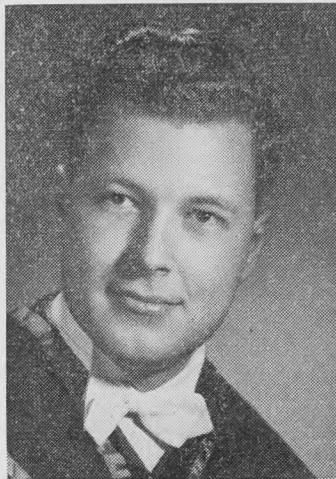
The nine top competitors went to Toronto as guests of the T. Eaton Co. Each received a gift of a gold watch and spending money to make their visit in the city a memorable one.

David is the son of Sigridur (Sig-

urdson) and Douglas MacLennan of Swan River. He is a grandson of Sigridur (Eggertson) Sigurdson and the late Sigurdur Sigurdson, also of Swan River.

★

CONSISTENT SCHOLARSHIP WINNER



Dr. Leslie Stephen Valberg

When **Leslie Stephen Valberg** of Regina, Sask., graduated in Medicine this spring from Queen's University (Kingston, Ont.), he topped all award winners in the final year in the faculty of medicine, receiving six scholarships and prizes.

Mr. Valberg won the medal in medicine and the \$100 Plunket prize in clinical medicine. He also tied for the Dean Fowler \$40. Scholarship for the highest marks in the sixth year examinations; won the Edgar Forrester \$40. prize for the highest standing in medicine and clinical medicine; the D. E. Mundell \$40 award for the highest aggregate in surgical applied anat-

omy, and the professor's \$25 prize in radiology.

The outstanding success of Leslie Stephen Valberg in his final year in medicine was featured in several papers in Ontario and considered quite a distinction in University circles. But it was nothing new for him to win multiple honors for a brilliant scholastic career. In his third and fifth years at Queen's he was first in class and placed second in fourth year. Among his awards are the following:

In third year: The W. W. Near and Susan Near Scholarship of \$80, and the Toronto Branch of the General Alumni Scholarship of \$100; in fourth year he again won the Near Scholarship of \$40 (for second highest standing) and The George and Mary Louise Patton Scholarship of \$80, for the greatest aptitude in fourth year clinical work; in fifth year, the Rueben Wells Leonard Penultimate Year Scholarship of \$300, and the Victor Lyall Goodwill Memorial Scholarship of \$100 in internal medicine.

On graduating from Grade XII at Canora (Sask.) High school in 1948, Leslie was winner of the Governor-General's Medal in the school division which includes Kamsack, Canora, Yorkton and Sturgis.

The young doctor is at present completing his internship at the Regina General Hospital and plans to return to Queen's next summer for further study in Medicine.

He was born at Churchbridge, Sask., June 3, 1930 and is a son of Mr. and Mrs. John Stefanson Valberg of Regina, where his father is Divisional Superintendent with the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool.

In the year 1900, John came with his parents, Stefan and Anna (Halldórsdóttir) Jónsson from Minni-Akra-

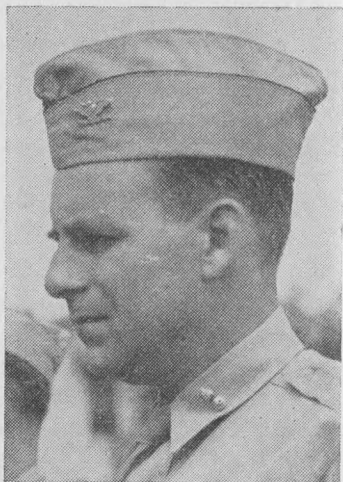
gerði, Skagafjörður, Iceland (see *Almanak Th.* 1920, page 46) Shortly after coming to Canada the family name was changed to Valberg. In 1927 John Valberg was married to Sigurrós Vigfússon, who was born at Selkirk, Man., and whose parents, Mr. and Mrs. Viglundur Vífússon both passed away at Betel Home, Gimli.

Dr. Leslie Valberg has a younger brother, John, who is now in his fourth year of Medicine at Queen's.

H. D.

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COLONEL HANSEN PROMOTED TO BRIGADIER GENERAL



Col. Floyd A. Hansen, former Chief of the Arsenal's Engineering Division and now attached to the Washington, D. C., office of the Chief of Ordinance, has been promoted to Brigadier General.

Colonel Hansen came to Picatinny as a first lieutenant in June, 1940, and remained there until December, 1942, when he was transferred to Fort Knox, Ky. He held the rank of lieutenant colonel at the time of his transfer.

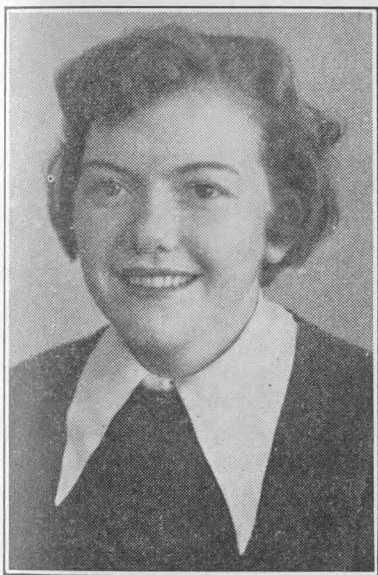
During his two-year tenure at Picatinny, Colonel Hansen was credited with having laid much of the ground-

work for the Arsenal's expansion and had much to do with planning loading lines and planning machinery layouts for various ammunition plants throughout the country.

During World War II, he served as Executive Officer of the Ordnance Section of First Army in the European Theatre and later served in a similar capacity at Fort Bragg, N. C., and Governor's Island, N. Y. He also has had tours of duty in Venezuela and at the Ordnance Ammunition Centre in Joliet, Ill. —See Icelandic Canadian Autumn issue 1949, p. 36

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WINS GOVERNOR GENERAL MEDAL



Frances Augustine Magnusson

Frances has again brought honor to the Foam Lake Unit Composite High School. She won the Governor-Generals Medal awarded to Grade XII students and was awarded a \$250.00 entrance Scholarship by the University of Saskatchewan, as well as a \$100 Foam Lake Unit Scholarship. She is

at present taking 2nd year Arts and Science in the University of Saskatchewan.

Frances is 17 years old, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gusti Magnusson. She has taken an active part in all phases of school life—public speaking, music, and sports.—See page 57, Summer 1954 edition of Icel. Can.

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THE BECKS VISIT SCANDINAVIA

Dr. Richard Beck, Professor of Scandinavian Languages and Literature and Head of the Department of Modern and Classical Languages at the University of North Dakota, and Mrs. Beck, spent the past summer in Scandinavia, primarily in Iceland and Norway.

Dr. Beck represented the Icelandic National League and Governor Norman Brunsdale of North Dakota, and gave one of the addresses at the festivities in Reykjavik on June 17th commemorating the 10th anniversary of the Icelandic Republic. He also represented the League and the Icelandic Federated Churches at the consecration of Dr. Ásmundur Guðmundsson as Bishop of Iceland, and addressed the annual convention of the Icelandic Church. Dr. Beck lectured at the University of Iceland and addressed large public gatherings in many parts of the country, everywhere bringing greetings from the Western Icelanders and telling about their cultural activities and contributions. Several of his addresses were broadcast nationally and many have already appeared in print on both sides of the Atlantic.

While in Iceland, where they visited many scenic and historic places. Dr. and Mrs. Beck were the guests of honor at numerous public and private functions, including a farewell banquet in appreciation of their visit giving

en by Dr. Kristinn Guðmundsson, the foreign Minister of Iceland, on behalf of the government.

In Norway Dr. Beck had a private audience with Crown Prince Olav, presented greetings from Governor Brunsdale of North Dakota to Prime Minister Oscar Torp, and participated in a broadcast dealing with Norwegians in North Dakota, which was short-waved to Norwegians in all parts of the world. In Oslo, the capital, Dr. and Mrs. Beck were guests of honor at a dinner given by The International League of Norsemen. Otherwise they spent their month in Norway visiting places of cultural and historic interest.

They spent a week in Copenhagen, visiting museums and other cultural institutions, as well as attending The Second International Congress of Classical Studies, at which Dr. Beck represented the University of North Dakota. They also spent a day in the University town of Lund in Sweden, and inspected its famous cathedral.

In connection with the trip Dr. Beck received several honors. The Icelandic Seamen's Association (he is a former fisherman and captain of a fishing boat) presented him with one of its top awards in the form of a magnificent Viking ship, only twice presented before. The Reykjavík lodge, "Framtíðin", of the International Order of Good Templars, presented him, at a farewell banquet, with an honorary life membership; and the International League of Norsemen awarded him, at its annual meeting in June in Oslo, its special citation of merit in recognition of his services to the organization and his contribution to Norwegian-American Cultural relations.

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PEARL PALMASON VIOLINIST



Pearl Palmason

Somebody once asked Sir Thomas Beecham why there weren't more women playing in his orchestra. His reply was:

"If they're pretty, they bother the men; if they aren't, they bother me."

It is a fairly safe bet that Pearl Palmason, titian-haired violinist well known to Toronto addicts of the symphony, would be no bother whatsoever to the conductor.

From her first appearance in solo recital in her native Winnipeg, on through her trek east to study at what was then the Toronto Conservatory of Music, to the realization of every violinist's dream—a recital in New York's Town Hall on Sept. 19, 1948—reviewers and critics have turned her charm to account with many hundreds of lines in their praise of her sheer musicality.

"A metropolitan debut of promise", predicted the Musical Courier of her Town Hall recital.

She was the first woman to act as concert master for Toronto's summer-time symphonies. As assistant concert master for the Promenade Symphony Concerts, she slips into Hyman Goodman's chair in his absence. When the concerts were televised for the first time this summer by the CBC, the cameras, too, played up her charms.

Miss Palmason joined the Toronto Symphony in 1942, and, with the exception of a year when she obtained leave of absence to study in New York, has played with them ever since. She also plays with the CBC symphony, the Singing Stars orchestra, and the York Concert Society group, and takes other engagements as they come along.

Although hour-wise the work is not too demanding (she seldom works more than 5 hours a day) in the words of Sir Ernest MacMillan: "The study of an instrument is a life-time proposition. In the case of the violin, it takes a little longer to make pleasant noises."

Miss Palmason first started studying at the age of 9 with her brother Palmi, in Winnipeg, where she acquired ATCM and an LRSM, the degree of the Royal School of Music of London, England. She came to Toronto on scholarship for study with Elie Spivak, has studied with such world-famed teachers as Kathleen Parlow, Carl Flesch (with whom she studied for two seasons in London England) and the brilliant Dr. D. C. Dounis, with whom she studied for a little more than a year in New York.

Though she no longer takes lessons, daily practice is taken for granted. During a busy concert season, she considers herself lucky to get in two hours practice a day.

The stock-in-trade of the orchestra musician is a trip-hammer technique, a facility for sight reading and a willingness to put up with off-beat work-

ing hours. While most people were enjoying a lazy Thanksgiving weekend, Pearl was putting in her appearance at the Soliseum for rehearsals and presentation of the Marian Pageant.

Auditions for the Toronto Symphony Orchestra involve playing of a prepared solo as well as sight reading. Including Miss Palmason, the TSO numbers eight women in its ranks, the latest addition an import from Brooklyn, Miss Veronica Klepacki, who lines up with the bass players in the back row.

Others are: Josephine Chuchman and Patricia Adams, violin; Stephanie Chomyk and Veria Cassidy, viola; Georgina Roberts, who plays cello, and Donna Hossack, harp.

There is no discrimination against women players, according to Jack Elton, manager for the TSO.

"We have never said: 'Let's not take her because she's a woman—especially if they look like Pearl,'" said Mr. Elton.

"However, a certain amount of stability is advisable," he went on, "and the hazard is less with the male."

If a girl is interested enough to devote the time and effort needed to make the musical grade, she usually has her sights set on a career as a soloist, in Mr. Elton's opinion.

"Playing in an orchestra then is merely a means to an end, whereas men are much more inclined to look upon it as a pleasant way to earn a living. This I believe accounts for the fact that women are so scarce in symphony orchestras."

With standards of excellence steadily rising, however, the successful soloist today has to be a flawless performer, and, to quote Pearl: "It is safer to earn your living in an orchestra."

Her earnings run to about \$150 a week during the winter season,

dropping considerably in the slower-paced summer months.

"It's a grind at times—you have to grow up with it to be able to put up with it—but most of the time I think it's worth it," is the way Pearl sums it up.

—Globe and Mail.



RECENT DONATIONS TO THE LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

Mr. S. K. Hall in Wynyard, Sask., a former organist and choirmaster of the First Lutheran church in Winnipeg, has recently donated to the Icelandic section of the University of Manitoba Library his collection of Icelandic music. This donation was made in memory of Mr. Hall's wife, Sigríður Hall, who died last spring. Mrs. Hall was a gifted singer and a fine musician in her own right.

Mr. Hall's collection consists of some 40 volumes of music by the following Icelandic composers, both in Iceland and in North America: Árni Thorsteinsson, Bjarni Þorsteinsson, Björgvin Guðmundsson, Brynjólfur Þorláksson, Gunnar Erlendsson, Hallgrímur Helgason, Jón Laxdal, Jónas Tómasson, Ólafur Hallsson, Ragnar H. Ragnar, Sigfús Einarsson, Sigurbjörn Sigurðsson, Sigurður Helgason, Sigurður Þórðarson, Sigvaldi Kaldalóns, Steingrímur K. Hall.

Several of the texts are English translations of the original Icelandic poems, a few German translations. Mr. Hall has, as is well known, taken special interest in writing music to Icelandic poems in their English translations.

Most of the volumes are in printed form, a number in manuscript form

and some in both print and manuscript.

Paul Bardal, an old co-worker of Mr. and Mrs. Hall in the musical field, has contributed to the collection 3 volumes of Jónas Helgason's Songs, published in Reykjavík in 1878, 1879 and 1881, in which are found some of the songs sung by the first Icelandic immigrants to this country.

Mr. Hall's aim in giving his collection to the Icelandic Library are in line with his life-long endeavours to present, promote and perpetuate Icelandic music.

It goes without saying that anybody interested in copying or mimeographing some Icelandic music, found in the collection, may borrow a volume or volumes from it for this purpose.

Early this winter Mr. Ásgen Magnússon of Birkimelur 6B, Reykjavík, Iceland, donated to the University of Manitoba Library his own illuminated manuscript of his second and revised translation of Job's Book. The first version was printed in Reykjavík in 1951.

The translation is rendered into Icelandic verse, not at all an easy venture, a challenge which Mr. Magnússon—according to all reviewers—has met admirably well. His preparatory work took him as far as studying the Hebrew original of the Book of Job.

The translation is preceded by an instructive prologue on Job's Book, its position in World Literature, its theme, message, age, and its author. The translator's commentary comes at the end of the Book, dealing with the more difficult items and problems of the work.

This presentation volume will be kept in the Rare Book collection of the University of Manitoba Library.

F. G.



Eleanor Johannson and Joyce Borgford

Among Manitoba 4-H Club representatives at the Royal Winter Fair in Toronto, a first prize went to the Arborg clothing club girls, Joyce Borgford and Eleanor Johannson, demonstrating Chic Travel Togs. The girls showed suits and dresses which they had made. —See Icelandic Canadian, Autumn Issue, 1954

NEW UNIVERSITIES CLUB IN LONDON, ENGLAND

Nearly 300 Canadians, most of them living in London, are forming a Canadian Universities Club. They are members of three existing Alumni associations representing the Universities of Toronto, McGill and Dalhousie. The object of the Association is to bring together Canadian University graduates in the United Kingdom in one club and to help the Canadian British Education Committee in encouraging young British students to study at Canadian Universities.

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CANADA'S POPULATION GAIN

About nine-tenths of the more than 15,000,000 people of Canada live within 200 miles of the United States border, which has much to do with the very considerable flow of Canadian tourist traffic into their neighbor nation. Half of the Canadian population resides in the relatively small area between Lake Huron's eastern point and the city of Montreal.

Canada has ten cities with populations greater than 100,000. Two-thirds of the population live in urban centres, and only a third on farms.

According to the 1951 census, more than 85 per cent of the Canadians are native born. About seven per cent were born in Britain and other Commonwealth countries, two per cent in the United States, and six per cent in all other countries. Canadians of British Isles stock—English, Irish, Scottish and Welsh—number slightly less than half the population. Canada has more than 155,000 native Indians, and there are about 10,000 Eskimos in the Canadian north.

Immigration and a rising birthrate are increasing the Canadian population at a rapid rate. There were nearly 165,000 new immigrants in 1952.

Canada last year replaced New Zealand as the world's leading trade on a per capita basis. The Canadian figure of \$630 worth of exports and imports per capita compared with New Zealand's \$573. In 1952 New Zealand led with a per capita trade value of \$707, while Canada was second with \$640.

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There was one teacher for every 10 pupils in schools for the blind and one for every 7 in schools for the deaf in Canada in 1951-52 as compared with one teacher for every 28 pupils in schools of all kinds.

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